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ANCIENT CHRISTIANITY,

AND THE

DOCTRINES OF THE OXFORD TRACTS

FOR THE TIMES.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "SPIRITUAL DESPOTISM."

Imo vero Sanctam Scripturam in summo et cœlesti autoritatis culmine collocatam, de veritate ejus certus ac securus legam.

AUGUSTINUS HIERONYMO.

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VOL. II.

SECOND EDITION.

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LONDON:
JACKSON AND WALFORD,
18, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.
W. CURRY, JUN. & CO. DUBLIN.
1842.

239
Anc
651

LONDON:
R. CLAY, PRINTER, BREAD STREET HILL.

PREFACE

TO

THE SECOND VOLUME.

(THE CONSERVATIVE OPERATION OF CHURCH FORMULARIES.)

QUESTIONS difficult to be determined in the abstract, and which perhaps will never be resolved in that form, are often, and with much advantage, superseded by the occurrence of events that serve to present them as simple questions of fact, concerning which a doubt can scarcely be entertained—or, at least, will not be entertained by men of a practical turn of mind.

Are Creeds, Confessions, Articles of Faith, and other ecclesiastical provisions, intended for the conservation of religious principles, and the maintenance of uniformity of belief, actually availing for these ends; or is their admitted utility, in this respect, overbalanced by their tendency to obstruct the development of Truth, and to promote insincerity in the profession of belief?

This question seems now as little likely as ever to be resolved in its abstract form; and well may we excuse ourselves from the attempt so to determine it.

Practically, and virtually, *every* religious community takes for itself the affirmative side, and in one mode or in another—directly, or indirectly, gathers itself around some

Confession, or Declaration of principles, which, in fact, is its conservative nucleus; or the organ, and the conveying medium of its continued identity, as a body.

Especially are these means resorted to—and unavoidably so, in all instances in which the seisin of property—whether lands, funds, or rents, is connected with the profession of religious opinions, or the support of specific modes of worship;—that is to say, in all cases of Religious Endowments, and Trusts. In such instances it is worse than idle "to kick against the pricks;" or, on the ground of abstract scruples, and of a theory, to refuse compliance with the inevitable condition of the civil institutions around us.

Few or none do so, when the practical question meets them, invested in its legal attributes; and when it is a point, not of theological science, but of the rightful or wrongful enjoyment or administration of funds.

So far, therefore, there seems an agreement of opinion, on all hands, virtually, if not formally pronounced, and it may be concluded—That, where Church Formularies—whether they be Articles of Religion, or Creeds, or Confessions, occupy the place of the Covenants of a Deed, securing the enjoyment of rents or privileges, they may be, and ought to be, appealed to, and enforced, for all the purposes contemplated by the grantor; and of which purposes *Law* may take cognizance.

Whether cognizance be taken of any alleged breach of such covenants, by ecclesiastical, or by civil courts, does not affect our present argument. The principle, in either case, is admitted, and is acted upon—That whatever opinion may be entertained concerning the propriety or utility of such provisions, in the abstract, yet where they do exist, they are to be made available for the purposes contemplated: and this, even when the risk be extreme of inducing men to make an insincere profession, or to compromise their inward convictions. The remedy in such cases is to be sought for on another ground.

There is no difficulty therefore, and no debate, concerning all those instances of which Law—ecclesiastical or civil, may properly take cognizance. But there are cases—not infrequent, and they are of the highest importance, which lie beyond the range of courts;—unless indeed such courts were constituted on the most arbitrary principles, and were to act as irresponsible, and undefined judicatories, empowered to inquire concerning what they please, and to deal with the accused in what way they please!

But inasmuch as no such "Holy Office" is tolerable in a free country—a country of Law—the cases we have now in view must be brought to another tribunal, namely—that of Public Opinion. At this tribunal they will, in the end, and in most instances, be equitably, and even *mildly* considered; and will be disposed of, much to the advantage of the community, and in a manner so gradual and gently efficacious, as to inflict upon the offending party the smallest possible harm.

During the course of the last fifty years, it has been more by the silent pressure of public opinion, than by the direct application of law—ecclesiastical or civil, that the Trinitarian doctrine of the Established Church has been brought to bear upon the clerical body, so as to exclude from it—we might say *to expel*, Socinian and Arian opinions; as well as that general temper of unbelief which had so extensively prevailed within it, during the last century. It was *felt* that a clergyman *could* not—*must not* screen himself in his position by a mere oral conformity, or a legal compliance with the terms of his occupation of emoluments, while he was known to treat the doctrine of the Trinity with levity, among his intimates. Such things *had* been—too often; but they could be endured no longer. Public opinion—the right feeling of the best portion of the community, set against this irreligious and disreputable inconsistency—and it gave way. Denied the liberty of unbelief, if they would enjoy the emoluments of the Church, men

were induced to re-consider their too hastily adopted scepticism:—they informed themselves better of the grounds and reasons of the orthodoxy of the Church; and, in innumerable instances, how indirect soever might have been their first impulse, they *honestly* convinced themselves of the Truth, and became—under this extraneous pressure, sincere, and perhaps serious, in their profession of the first principles of Christianity.

Now in this signal instance the Established Church was saved from heterodoxy—from doctrinal apostasy—as the instrumental means—by its Creeds, Articles, Homilies, and Liturgy, operating, for the most part, not through the organs of ecclesiastical or civil Law; although these might have been applicable to particular cases; but rather, and in a far more auspicious manner, by the firm and continued influence of public opinion.

And such, precisely, are the conditions of the case with which, at this moment, the Church of England—AND THE COUNTRY, has to do, in the instance of those who hold the opinions of the Oxford Tract Writers.

These parties are said, as Clergymen—and we do not question it, to be distinguished by their strict conformity with the directions of the Rubric.—It is their pride to officiate with a scrupulous regard to the letter of their instructions! They, of all men, are safe from the finger of law—ecclesiastical. Be it so: and although there were room for a question on this ground, it is one with which the writer of these pages would think it most unbecoming in him to meddle.

But there is another case supposable, and it is that with which, in fact, we have to do:—it is a case touching, not merely the preservation and prosperity of the Established Church; but the wellbeing of the country, and the maintenance of that high moral tone which has been the distinction of the British people among the nations.

With this case therefore every Englishman, every Chris-

tian, every father of a family, is personally and deeply concerned; nor need any apology be offered by one whose feelings and solicitudes are those of an Englishman, a Christian, and a Father, when he comes forward to challenge the attention of all who themselves respond to such emotions, to a case not less signal and critical than any which has ever affected the welfare of the British people.—

—A flagrant dissent from the mind, and tenor, and actual teaching of the Church, as expressed in its Formularies, conjoined with an over-punctilious conformity to the *letter* of its regulations, could not fail—if it prevailed through the country, to operate most perniciously in depraving the religious sentiments and moral principles of all classes; and especially so of the Clergy themselves.

Is there room then to affirm the fact of such a dissonance? Public opinion has already, and very generally pronounced itself in the affirmative; and this decision must become more general, and more authoritative, in proportion as all the facts bearing upon the question are set forth and understood.

When this preliminary shall have been completed, there is reason to believe that Oxford Tract Theology—including as it does all the principles, and almost every ingredient of the Romanism of the middle ages, will share the fate of the heterodoxy of the last century, and will be expelled—not by force, or the arm of authority; but by the irresistible pressure, on all sides, of PUBLIC OPINION—that is to say, the right-minded resentments of the soundest and best informed portion of the community.

I need only add that as to promote this consummation has been the object, *generally*, of this work, so especially of the Number now published, and of the portion yet to appear.

STANFORD RIVERS,
March 24, 1842.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

FOUR LECTURES

ON

SPIRITUAL CHRISTIANITY,

DELIVERED IN THE

HANOVER-SQUARE ROOMS, LONDON,

MARCH, 1841.

Royal 12mo.

CONTENTS OF THE FIFTH NUMBER.

PAGE

DEDICATORY LETTER ix

THE AUTHOR AND HIS OPPONENTS 1

A GENERAL REPLY TO OBJECTIONS, BY A RE-STATEMENT OF THE QUESTION 18

What the Question is not — The Deference claimed for Antiquity must be challenged on the assumed Ground of FACT, or HYPOTHESIS, or THEORY 28

The Question stated concerning the assumed FACT — Illustration of the Bearing of this Question on the present Controversy . . 30

SALVIAN, of Marseilles, his Time and Character 35

His Evidence as to the Condition of the Christian World, at the Close of the Nicene Era 37

His Declarations as to the universal pravity of the Church, and the general Corruption of Morals 40

The Motive of the Caution he uses as to the Monks and Clergy . . 47

Comparative moral Condition of the Catholic Church, and the heretical Barbarians 51

State of North Africa, and Morals of the Carthaginian Church . . 65

Romanism a Reform of Ancient Christianity 69

The Value of Salvian's Evidence 74

Inquiry as to the *internal* or spiritual Condition of the Nicene Church 80

Alternative as to the Genuiness of the Evidence now to be produced 82

The Standard of Piety we must appeal to 84

Ancient Religious Memoirs 86

The Lausiac History of Palladius 87

The Saints of this History 89

The "Ecclesiastical Almanac" 102

The Ascetic Miracles 104

The Historia Religiosa of Theodoret 115

A Comparison, on several Points, between Ancient and Modern Piety 118

The total Absence of Evangelical Sentiments among those reckoned the most Eminent for Sanctity in the ancient Church 129

LONDON:
R. CLAY, PRINTER, BREAD STREET HILL.

TO THE VENERABLE

THOMAS BEWLEY MONSELL,

ARCHDEACON OF DERRY,

AND PRECENTOR OF CHRIST'S CHURCH, DUBLIN.

My Dear Sir;

I am very sensible of the kindness of your late communications, and set a high value upon the expressions they contain of your continued and cordial regard. And yet, how vivid soever may be the pleasure with which I think of your steady friendship, it is with still more satisfaction that I find you declaring your confirmed conviction of the goodness of the cause which I have ventured thus actively to espouse.

It has appeared to you, as to others, and I believe to some of the best informed and most intelligent of my readers, that the various criticisms of which these numbers have been the subject, have exhibited more ill feeling and vexation than solid argument; and that the writers, while evidently impelled by an earnest wish to drive me altogether from the field, have left me undisturbed in the position I at first assumed; and have done me as little damage, in their eager assault upon the details of my evidence, as could well be supposed, considering its extent and variety, the vastness of the mass whence it has been drawn, the urgent circumstances under which it has been collected; as well as

the learning, the acuteness, and the animosity of those employed to demolish it.

These various and animated assaults have however, and for the reasons which I have stated in the early pages of this number, determined me to divert from the plan which I had laid down. I have indeed no wish to extend these numbers beyond the limit of another—that is to say, a second volume; but I am almost indifferent as to the particular subjects with which the remaining pages shall be occupied;—only anxious to make good, in the opinion of impartial and intelligent readers, whatever I have already, and deliberately affirmed. This I confidently hope to do; and whether my purpose be effected in one manner, or in another, is with me a point of secondary consideration.

In stating the course which I am now taking, I wish particularly to save you, my dear sir, the mortification of thinking, or of being told, that I mean to evade meeting the objections or exceptions of my critics and reviewers. Every objection which has any colour of reason, and every exception which an impartial reader might wish to see disposed of (so far as such objections or exceptions may come to my knowledge) I hope fairly to encounter, and to do so in a manner that shall not expose me to the danger of forfeiting your good opinion, or that of any who have hitherto honoured me therewith. And I will here express my wish that, as I advance, if to you, or to any other candid reader, it shall seem that I am failing to afford the satisfaction which you, or they may desire, I may receive frank intimations, to that effect.

But you will grant that, in arranging the materials of my reply, I am free to dispose of them in the manner which, to myself, seems the most effective. It might indeed best have pleased some of my opponents, if, like an irritated controvertist, I had turned to the details affecting my personal share in the argument; and had, while so occupied, and while running hither and thither, in pursuit

of petty criticisms, abandoned the great argument which is now at issue. I shall not take this course; not even to oblige those critics to whose candour, temper, and gentlemanly bearing, I am so much indebted.

Instead of doing so, I shall first endeavour, by stating the argument anew, and by supporting it with fresh and ample proofs, to establish the momentous allegation—That the ancient church, notwithstanding its eminent merits in some instances, had, at an early time, fatally departed from apostolic Truth;—that, in consequence of this departure, or apostasy, it wandered into paths of dangerous and puerile superstition, and became abandoned to the belief of lies;—AND THEREFORE, that any endeavour, in whatever way modified or disguised, to follow the leading of that church, or to revive its characteristic principles, or to imitate its usages, is to be deprecated in the most decisive manner.

When I shall have done my best to make good these—my original allegations, I shall address myself to particular objections; or to such of them at least, as may not have been virtually and satisfactorily disposed of in the course of the more general argument.

It may happen to the commander of a vessel, or of a fort, to be attacked, at the same moment, by a public foe, and by a private enemy. In such a case a loyal man would, I think, first fight his ship, or defend his fort, in duty to his king and country—happen what might to himself; and having done so, he would turn to the assailant of his personal honour. I must follow this example. Let not my critics say, meantime, that I wish to forget them.

With the view, at once, of excluding exceptions, and of enabling the impartial reader to form his own opinion of the fidelity of my representations, I have determined, without regarding the severe labour it involves, to produce all the original passages on which any stress is laid; and these I shall accompany with such notes and illustrations,

as may seem requisite for putting the reader into the most favourable position possible, as arbitrator of the controversy. These various materials are, by necessity, remanded to a Supplement, which I hope will very speedily follow this number.

I cannot, my dear sir, conclude this, my second letter, without expressing, in the most decisive manner, my strengthened, and very serious conviction, that the controversy which has been originated by the Oxford Tract writers, involves nothing less than the substance of Christianity itself; and that, in relation either to the spiritual welfare of the people, or to the maintenance of the moral tone which distinguishes this protestant country, no advantage whatever would be secured by stopping short where those writers would wish to stop, and by excluding what is peculiar to the romish church.

The question concerning antiquity is a question between the GOSPEL, and the Superstition which so early supplanted it. We are not inquiring concerning rites; but concerning the substance of genuine piety. We are not asking whether it be a wise or an idle custom to burn candles on an altar at noon; but whether the glory of the Saviour shall continue to shine from the pulpit; or shall be displaced by the glare of a poetic and dramatic pietism. We do not care, nor should take the trouble to ask, whether fasting twice, or five times in the week, best promotes the health of the soul; but whether genuine christian sentiments are likely to survive in a church which should be persuaded, if not to deny, yet to conceal, the doctrine of the Atonement. It is not episcopacy that is just now in question; but the efficacious presence of the Shepherd and Bishop of souls. We are not talking of the attenuated continuity of apostolic powers; but of the unchanging grace of HIM who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. We are not discussing the ambiguous import of sacramental phrases; but are anxiously asking whether, as in the ancient church, the

people should be taught to look for salvation to the sacraments, or to the Saviour. The controversy of the present hour is not to determine to what extreme limit the priest's power of absolution may lawfully be stretched; but to fix this momentous principle, whether the contrite heart and troubled conscience should soothe itself with a sacerdotal form of pardon; or should be encouraged to approach the throne of grace, and without any other mediation than that of the one Mediator, seek thence, and receive, the assurance of reconciliation.

A clear and much corroborated conviction of the vital importance of the controversy now pending in the Church, and with which I have ventured to concern myself, excludes, at the present moment, almost every inferior consideration, and renders me calmly bold (in reliance I hope upon the Divine aid) although I find myself set upon by a phalanx of academic learning, and of ecclesiastical authority, and actively assailed by almost every organ of religious opinion.

Whoever my opponents may be, and of what sort soever may have been the expressions of their hostility, I am inclined to hope that you will not detect, in the following pages, the indications of irritated feelings, any more than of trepidation. If ever I have felt sure of my ground, it is now; and this confidence, steadily increasing as I have become more and more familiar with my subject, has exempted me altogether from the angry emotions which might otherwise easily have been provoked. If you meet with any expressions which seem to belie this declaration, point them out to me, and they shall be erased.

Give me, my dear Sir, always the benefit of your valuable counsel, and of your prayers, and believe me,

Faithfully, your obliged friend,

THE AUTHOR.

STANFORD RIVERS,
June 24, 1840.

So far as the allegations advanced in this number may stand in need of further support, it will be furnished in the Supplement; for which also has been reserved a mass of miscellaneous citations, and corroborative facts; and which will together, it is believed, establish beyond the possibility of reasonable doubt, whatever has here been affirmed, and spoken of as important to the argument.

No. 5.] [*Price 2s. 6d.*

ANCIENT CHRISTIANITY,

&c. &c.

THE AUTHOR AND HIS OPPONENTS.

To have gone on in the execution of the task I have undertaken, as already announced, without explicitly adverting to any of the numerous criticisms bestowed upon the preceding numbers, would have been not merely a more agreeable course, but in the end equally satisfactory; inasmuch as it would have been easy, while advancing in the prescribed line of argument, to have met misrepresentations by new, and less ambiguous statements of facts, as well as quietly to have turned the edge of nugatory objections.

This method I should certainly have adhered to, holding all personal feelings in abeyance, if I had thought merely of those of my assailants whose unscrupulous rancour could not but supply me with a sufficient defence, and which has, in fact, as I find, done me a good service already, with calm-minded and equitable readers. But I have to think of others, and to remember that the argument of this work (although not the *evidence*) has been attacked by writers who claim the consideration due, in all cases, to gentlemen, to scholars, and to persons governed by motives of justice and christian principle. It would indeed have cost me no effort of self command to leave the one class of opponents in possession of the ground they have chosen to occupy, and which by prescription,

and immemorial usage, belongs to the cause they espouse; but I do not profess any such indifference to public opinion as would have been implied in observing silence in regard to the other class.

Besides; I could not fairly have availed myself, as it is important that I should do, of the testimony of *these* my declared, but equitable opponents, as to the general validity and correctness of the evidence I have adduced, without, at the same time, thanking them for the correction of a few (and few they are) incidental errors into which I have fallen, and meeting ingenuously any objections which have a colour of reason, and which an upright and well informed antagonist might be expected to urge. Moreover, and this is of still more weight, fair opponents of this class ought to be considered as representing that portion of an author's readers which, if he believes that he has momentous principles to defend, he would most wish to satisfy and convince;—those I mean who, though accustomed and inclined to view the subjects in debate in another aspect, yet are not less honest and sincere than himself, in the search for truth. To disregard the exceptions advanced or entertained by critics and readers of this order would indeed be to give a proof of a dogmatic and arrogant temper.

If it were only to show that this imputation of arrogance and dogmatism is as unfounded as are others, advanced against the author, a distinct reply to all objectors would be desirable. And with the same intention, and to make it evident (as evident as may be) that a sovereign regard to Truth prevails with me over every inferior consideration, I shall, in the course of this reply, plainly acknowledge every instance of inadvertence or error that may have been found to attach to the evidence adduced in the preceding numbers. These inadvertences, I perceive, are such as do not, in any degree, invalidate the inferences I have drawn:—they leave the argument untouched; and they are of a kind from which, I will boldly say, no industry or uprightness of purpose, can always secure a writer who (and especially if the entire literary labour rests upon himself) has to adduce voluminous and various evidence, from many ponderous works, in unspoken languages; and who, moreover, has to meet the urgency of a passing controversy at the moment, or not at all. These incidental

errors, too, are of that kind of which a list of startling instances might easily be drawn from the controversial works of eminent and accomplished writers :—they are, in fact, such as an opponent who felt that he could, in an open manner, overthrow his adversary's main argument, would have scorned to insist upon.

Right or wrong in such a belief, I have believed myself called upon to do what I could to expose the folly and pernicious consequence of a delusion, now spreading itself through the church, and threatening to overthrow the labours of the martyr reformers, and to involve the country in the gloom of another night of superstition.—But my critics have told me that it would have been wise to employ in such a task the "nine years" of literary gestation. I can only say in reply, that a nine years' diffusion of nicene church principles, unchecked, would be enough to reduce England to the condition of the East, and of the south of Europe, at the close of the fourth century—a condition (as I shall presently show) of spiritual debauchery, and of flagrant impiety.—Nine years? unless this pestilential cloud, through God's mercy, be quickly dispersed, a nine years will see those constant sisters, Atheism, Superstition, and Despotism, apportioning the land among them. Let us ask what have the *past* nine years done for us, and so estimate the future. This period of time has blighted fair hopes of catholic union; it has saddened generous hearts; it has baffled the well-omened endeavours of the wise; it has given a pæan to the atheist; it has flushed the cheek of decrepit Rome with the hopes of her youth!—Nine years? it is these past nine years that have seen the venom of Oxford Tract doctrines insidiously shed into the bosoms of perhaps a majority of the younger clergy of the episcopal church. At the end of such another period we may have to look back toward the light kindled by the Reformers, as a glimmer, fading in the remote horizon; and forward—into an abyss!

Whatever therefore any one might properly attempt with the hope of aiding to rescue christianity and protestantism in England, it must be done to-day, even although literary reputation may be endangered by so much haste; and even although, in the urgency of a moment of public danger and anxiety, a man should be found guilty of having misread a particle, or of citing a

passage, as from one treatise, which is actually found in another!—No one, I boldly affirm it, is fit for this now-pending warfare, whose solicitude for his personal reputation, as a writer, is so sensitive as that he would be dismayed, and inclined to slink away from the field, if convicted in having sinned against the quantity of a syllable, or mistaken an idiom, or mismanaged a metaphor.

The work now to be done is of a kind that demands powerful religious convictions, as well as a determined natural temper; and these qualities, if they meet in the same bosom, will leave little room for a regard to the fripperies and pedantries with which those are wont to be employed whose utmost ambition is satisfied when they reach the pedestal of academic or literary celebrity. Academic and literary celebrity!—how often have we seen men, gifted so as might have enabled them to defend great truths, and to promote the substantial welfare of the mass of mankind, relinquish the brightest hopes of a christian philanthropy, rather than expose their "literary reputation" to any peril! We might soon name those who would actually have done a good and great work, in their time—if it had not involved some jeopardy of their fame, as accomplished orators and writers!

I claim no merit whatever for being altogether of another mind, in this respect; but simply state the plain fact, which has something to do with my engagement in the present argument, that, as to mere literary celebrity, those are welcome to it, who care for it. If I have any ambition it runs in another line. This declaration may save some future trouble to those who have lately compelled themselves to write scores of pages, with no other apparent intention, than that of convincing the author of these numbers, and the public, that he is not entitled to the little fame he may have chanced to acquire—no one can tell how.—Be it so:—but whether it be so or not, we will go on with the argument concerning the condition of the ancient church. If arraigned, meantime, on account of his many and grievous *literary* delinquencies, the author assuredly will "let judgment go by default," while he steadily prosecutes his purpose.

I am to be numbered among those who seriously think that the late hurried and surprising advances of error of all kinds, and especially the revival of atheism and romanism, has a meaning

which bears upon a not-distant change in the condition of Christendom, and perhaps of the human family; and who moreover believe that this approaching revolution shall be of a kind that must entirely occupy the thoughts of men, when it does occur, and that shall set the human mind forward on a new and high path.—If so, then we are just coming to the close of that period during which a thing so trivial as literary fame might be permitted to draw around itself any degree of importance, or might engage the serious cares of a wise man. Under the impression of views such as these, it can be no great virtue to estimate at a low price, what in truth is of ambiguous value at any time.

But I must yet ask a little indulgence for what is personal;—and when once quit of this theme, the reader shall be troubled with it no more. To me it is manifest, and others have thought so, that those who have signalized their zeal and virulence in assailing what I have already written, have believed that the author might be soon frightened, and driven from the sacred field upon which he has dared to set a foot. Nothing, they thought, could be needed but a prompt and decisive expression of academic scorn and official wrath, to make him stoop, and retire. A course of inquiry so inconvenient, and so unlooked for, might thus be quashed, and the presumptuous intruder trampled on; and all would yet be safe! Unless something of this sort had been supposed, it is incredible that men whose reputation is so important to them, should have risked, at once their cause, and their characters, on the mere chance that they should put their opponent to silence, and that statements would never be called in question, or strictly scrutinized, which, if spread open by a fearless adversary, must bring them very little credit.

It appears also to have been supposed, as a probable event, that the author, if provoked to retaliate, and to make good his cause by any means, would be so hurried on as to forget all discretion in quoting antiquity; and thus disgust his friends, and afford an easy triumph to his enemies, while the question at issue would be lost sight of.*. All this was a great mistake, and a fault in tactics.

* Κακοήθης δ' ὢν, ——— τοῦτο παντελῶς εὔηθης ᾠήθης, τοὺς περὶ τῶν πεπραγμένων καὶ πεπολιτευμένων λόγους ἀφέντα με, πρὸς τὰς λοιδορίας τὰς παρὰ σοῦ τρέψεσθαι· οὐ δὴ ποίησω τοῦτο, οὐχ οὕτω τετύφωμαι.

The antagonist whom these gentlemen have endeavoured to crush, is not used to be swayed by motives of fear;—he is moreover of a temper gladly to learn whatever may be learned, even from the most virulent enemy:—he is capable of pursuing an object with rigorous assiduity, amid many discouragements, and has been schooled in the art of walking alone—with foes on one side of his path, and disapproving friends on the other; and he has at several times, through the years of an arduous course, made serious sacrifices to his love of Truth. Let the candid reader kindly pardon me so much egotism as this—which indeed is not irrelevant to the subject.

Another mistake of management has been fallen into by my learned 'critics,' and formidable 'magazine' foes—a mistake very natural to men of the cloister, used to pursue the dim and endless inquiries of a nugatory erudition—men scarcely at all conversant with the straightforward reasonings of common life, and perhaps indifferently disciplined in the healthful school of physical science. They have allowed themselves to believe that the questions of fact, now at issue, are of a sort that might easily be entangled by learned ingenuity, and so overlaid with Greek and Latin, as that ordinary readers would soon be lost in the maze, and the public sickened and wearied of the strife of words. This too will appear to have been an error. One may have learned but little Oxford logic, and yet know something of that right reason which helps a man to force his way through flimsy sophistries, on the open ground of historical evidence.

Both as to the methods of reasoning to be employed, and as to the probability of success, there is a vast difference between what is really mysterious, and what is only involved, or has become difficult artificially, and in consequence of its having been incrusted by inveterate errors. I have no wish to touch mysteries, no wish to intrude upon Theology; I have no intention to concern myself with that which a layman may not (all proprieties saved) well addict himself to. But history, surely, is a common field; nor is even church history a glebe, fenced off from that common. If a man has books around him, and finds that certain *matters of fact* have been much misunderstood, or insidiously mis-stated, may he not say so, and make it appear? It is a new

sort of despotism which would inscribe a procul profani in front of this or that department of mere HISTORY. I reject this endeavour to shut me out of the open field of *history*, because forsooth I am a layman! It may in the end appear to have been well that a layman, well affected toward christianity, and knowing in some degree how to discriminate between the pure doctrine of Christ and the corruptions of an apostate church, should step forward in time to prevent the advance of another Gibbon who, with malignant ingenuity striving to confound (as the Oxford Tract writers are now doing) the apostate church with christianity itself, shall compile a church history such as must make all ears tingle.

If it be true, and if it may easily be proved, that the ancient church had apostatized, and was, by consequence, in a debauched condition, then those who are labouring to conceal this fact, and who would stake the truth and honour of christianity itself upon the credit of that apostate church, are putting it in the power of the infidel to come forward, armed with irresistible evidence, and holding it up to say—'See, this is your christianity!' Such in fact was Voltaire's mode of assailing the gospel, which he well knew he could never attack in itself, or until he had confounded with it the corruptions that have stolen its attire. To part the two, therefore, and to set off the folly and infatuation of man, from the wisdom of God, and to show that much of what has been called christianity was only a varnished polytheism—to do this is a service not unimportant in an age of invigorated unbelief, like the present. *

The matters now in dispute are so intelligible, and the evidence which sustains the argument is so abundant that, even although it were very unskilfully stated, it still would be safe. Very much might be deducted from the evidence, and yet it would be more than enough to support the conclusion. In the present instance I hope to convince candid readers that, if every particle of the proof alleged in the preceding numbers were liable to exception, the position I have assumed is still impregnable. If the whole that has been advanced were surrendered, we should then begin anew, and by producing in profusion the actual testimonies, against which no objection can be raised, we should come to the same issue—

namely, That any endeavour to link the records of the ancient church with the canonical scriptures, as in any way forming a joint authority; or, more generally, the endeavour to set up the ancient church as an exemplar, and as being worthy of our religious reverence, or to go back from the doctrine and principles of the Reformation, to those of the nicene divines — that such an endeavour is fond, foolish, pernicious; and, as related to the professions and obligations of protestant clergymen, that it is faithless, not to say traitorous.

To no other conclusion than this can the present controversy come, if it be pursued to its issue. It would be an affectation to assume the tones of hesitation, or of diffidence, on ground such as this. I am at least conversant enough with the methods of reasoning, and with the rules of induction in the several departments of mathematical, physical, moral, forensic, and historical inquiry, to know when and where absolute confidence is justifiable; and where even the most sedulous and impartial scrutiny may fail to produce conviction. Many things are angrily discussed in corners of the religious commonwealth, and among those who scarcely ever look beyond a corner, which are either too hopelessly uncertain, or are too manifestly certain, to detain a well disciplined and independent mind, for a moment.

In reference to such points, when laboriously debated, it can be no arrogance to speak, on the one hand impatiently, on the other confidently. — Thus, concerning the precise manipulative process by which baptism was administered to the first converts at Jerusalem, it would be futile to inquire, *as if it might be certainly known*; — and equally futile would it be to call in question the *fact*, that *water* baptism was practised and enjoined by the apostles. A meek tempered condescension toward the infirm in mind, or the ill-informed, may indeed induce one to *seem* to treat such questions otherwise than as they can rightfully claim to be treated. But it would be absurd, or worse than absurd to do so, except for a moment, and from such a motive of charity.

The extreme ill temper that has marked the criticisms of which these numbers have been the subject, I cannot hesitate to attribute to a consciousness that, in reference to certain matters of history, superabundantly attested, and beyond all possibility of

serious doubt, when once inquired into, the position so inconsiderately assumed when it was supposed that no diligent and independent inquiry would be instituted—must ere long be abandoned.

This uneasy consciousness cannot but have been enhanced by the many sharp rebukes, and some of them from episcopal lips, which of late have indicated a rising resentment, and a refreshed protestant feeling in the church. It is impossible but that Oxford Tract writers, and their adherents, must have felt that their entire scheme has come to be in extreme peril, and is now not unlikely to be consigned to ignominious oblivion. Even those whose professional inclinations and habits of thought impel them to go with these writers as far as may be possible, have distinctly convicted them of misrepresentation of facts; and (in gentle terms indeed) have given them to understand that they have trespassed upon truth and honour, and must retreat.* Meanwhile the common sense of the laity, on all sides, even within the church, is making a jest every day of the practical follies by which these principles are expressed.

At the same time—and this the writers and their friends must now well understand, not a little reverential feeling, respecting themselves, has of late been dissipated. A while ago it was imagined that a quire of canonized martyrs and holy anchorets had risen from their graves, and were coming among us. It was actually

* The figure of rhetoric—whether anaphora or epizeuxis, which consists in the frequent repetition of an emphatic phrase, is always held to indicate a strong feeling in the speaker; and especially so, if it be manifest that he is repressing his inmost sentiments. In this view we cannot misunderstand the solemnly reiterated—'I lament to say,' which marks some pages of the bishop of Exeter's late Charge. In what terms his lordship might have expressed the manly indignation which he smothers, had no indirect considerations ruled him, it is not difficult to imagine. Or, let us suppose another case—namely, that the instances of doctrinal error, and of discreditable prevarication which his lordship 'laments,' and 'more than laments' to adduce, had been chargeable upon certain declared opponents of the church. Would the reprehension have been measured, as it is, now that Oxford professors are the objects of it? I think not. If then the Oxford Tract writers were inclined to deal equitably with themselves, and if they would only *translate* his lordship's courtesies into the spirited vernacular of *some* of his controversial or parliamentary vituperations, they would hear themselves roundly accused, by an accomplished bishop, of dishonest perversions of evidence; not to say, of a serious sophistication of their engagements, as protestant clergymen. See pages 77—81.

believed that the ancient asceticism, purified by an entombment of centuries, was walking the earth to exemplify the temper of heaven. But these anchorets have spoken out—and the illusion is past—they have written themselves forth in magazines and in newspapers, and now the world clearly understands that our 'British' Jeromes, and our 'British' Dominics, have inherited the dispositions, as well as the principles of their predecessors. Whether they may succeed in making good all the exclusive pretensions which they advance, is at present doubtful; but already these champions of antiquity have fully vindicated their personal shares in the undoubted apostolicity of the ascetic temper.

Among the errors I shall have to acknowledge, this is one; but there are many persons of great discernment to share with me the discredit of having too hastily supposed that asceticism and superstition might be revived, apart from its inveterate qualities, and might be practised and promoted in a christian spirit. The earlier compositions of the writers of the Tracts for the Times, and which preceded any actual, or perhaps anticipated assault upon them, must be allowed to indicate (generally—not without exceptions) a christian mildness of temper, and a superiority to the vulgar controversial style. Moreover, the official standing, and the private reputation of the individuals to whom these writings were attributed, seemed to afford ample security against any trickery or discreditable management, in the conduct of their argument. An extraordinary amount of confidence and good opinion was assigned to these writers for their use.

But how have they used this confidence? I grant that, in dealing with assailants, they have not betrayed more ill feeling than has too often marked theological strife:—but then they have not betrayed less. These writers, in packing their evidence, in schooling their witnesses, in making up a case against an opponent, have perhaps resorted to no evasions, other than such as have too often disgraced even a better cause; but then they have shown themselves not more scrupulous than disputants of the vulgar stamp ordinarily are. Whatever, in the dressing up an argument is wont to be done by men whose zeal is more vivid than their moral sense, these writers have done. If they are not worse than the usual run of sectarian champions, clearly

they are not much better; and it is now as certain that the Oxford Tract divines are only ordinary men, as it is that the nicene church was not so holy or pure as to be entitled to our reverence. Even in stating more strongly my corrected opinion as to the controversial integrity of the Oxford Tract writers I should be borne out by good and high authority.*

In thus stating my corrected opinion in this particular—a correction conveyed to me, not merely in the private admonitions of my friends, but through the very pens of my opponents, I would carefully guard against the supposition that I am running, as do some, into a contrary extreme. There are not wanting those who are saying—'These men are Jesuits.' This is unwarrantable; and, as it is an imputation which should not be advanced on any ground of mere conjecture, so is it actually contradicted by the features of the case.—Who can believe any such thing? Men who have so far outrun the feeling upon which they were endeavouring to work, and who have shown so little discretion in the general arrangement of their attempt to subvert protestantism—assuredly such men are no Jesuits. Those who have embraced this injurious supposition cannot be intimately acquainted with the policy of the romish court; for Rome has always shown an equal skill in the choice of her agents, and in giving them their instructions; and it is a mere act of justice, to the Italian machinators on the one hand, and to the Oxford Tract divines on the other, to relieve both from the imputation of having held a secret correspondence: the one party being clearly exonerated by their well known tact and ability;—the other, as clearly, by their manifested deficiency, at least in the former.

In disclaiming all participation in so uncharitable an hypothesis, which even the facts of the case disallow, I must not be understood

* Since the above was written I have been assured, in an authentic manner, that one of the first biblical scholars and theologians of the day, and who holds a high station in the church, is prepared to establish against these writers a heavy indictment of misstatements, and perversions of evidence; and that he has denounced them as controvertists, not to be trusted. To the same effect are the strictures of the Bishop of Calcutta upon the Oxford Tract writers, as controvertists merely. See the Appendix to his recently printed Charge.

to disclaim also the theory which explains the invariable connexion of a very peculiar species of malignity, with the ascetic and superstitious doctrine and discipline. No one who has followed the history of this scheme of comfortless pietism can mistake its characteristic quality, wherever it appears ; or at least whenever it has been rudely touched. In recollecting the actual history of ascetic superstition, through a long course of centuries, and in calling to mind how it has been used to deal with its adversaries, and in remembering the mere fact that hundreds of thousands of victims, men, women, and children, have endured the last refinements of torture, or have suffered the horrors of cremation, on no other account than that of having trifled with the ascetic doctrine or practice—one cannot doubt that some uniform and very peculiar influence has run through the system, from first to last.

But why should this self-denying scheme have been thus marked, from age to age, with a peculiar malignity? It is because itself is the creature of those deep emotions of the moral nature which, when actively stirred, can be harmonized by nothing but Heaven's own truth. When vindictive sentiments, springing from man's natural conceptions of the divine inexorable justice, take their direction inward, preying upon the heart, and inflaming the imagination, and giving rise, at once, to ferocious austerities and to gloomy observances—when this is the condition of the soul, the least demonstration of hostility is enough to turn, toward the assailant, the burning stream which torments the heart.

Besides, the victim of this spiritual malady is never himself satisfied with his own expiatory performances, as if they were sufficient. — The suspicion haunts him that all may prove too little : his best hope of propitiating the Unseen Retributive Power is but a precarious hope, which, although watered with his tears, refuses to grow. In proportion therefore to his own secret sense of the doubtfulness of the issue of all his toil and pain, is his anger against any who take part with conscience in calling it in question. Tell him that fastings, floggings, vigils, ceremonies, are all of no avail for the purpose intended—he knows it too well, and therefore foams with rage against the objector, who echoes the deep misgivings of his soul.

Nor is this all; perhaps it is not the chief part of the mystery before us. However sad and sorrowful may be the course of the ascetic devotee, and although his frenzy may sometimes touch upon the sublime, it will be impossible to exempt it altogether from ridicule. Absurdity clings to these home-made afflictions; and contempt follows formality as a shadow. He himself is partly conscious that, if he be not loudly laughed at, it is because he is indebted to the good manners of all but a few fanatics like himself. But then this very consciousness sharpens his irritation, when he catches the glance of scorn in the spectator's eye. Such an interaction of motives is quite intelligible. It is however to be observed that the rancour of ascetic superstition (it were well if we had *one word* to express what is *one in nature*) is always directly as the light by which it is surrounded. The ancient gymnosophists—the anchorets of polytheism, appear to have been quiet creatures, as harmless as they were absurd. Not such were their successors in the desert, who, taking up the more powerful impulses of christianity, and rejecting its happy harmonizing truth, drew a new and mighty impulse into the ascetic scheme. Orthodox monks were living men; — there was blood in their veins, and there was bile too:—they had tongues, they took hold of pens, they made themselves listened to; —they knew how to deal with their enemies; and a great part of what is called church history, is nothing but the story of the contests between these very men, and their opponents. Very soon the profane multitude learned that it would henceforward be at their peril to speak slightingly of holy ascetics, and that, to make a jest of cowls, bare feet, beads, crucifixes, relics, and noon candles, was dangerous sport, and might end in being burned alive.

The same system, inducing the same temper—for the human heart is the same in every age—must express itself in other modes in England, and in the nineteenth century. But certainly this temper will neither be ameliorated by repression, nor softened by the recollection that principles and practices condemned alike by the Gospel, and by common sense, have now to keep their ground in the face of evangelic light, and as surrounded by diffused intelligence. Even all the terrors of Rome, and her Inquisition, in her bright days, could not preserve monkery and superstition

from the scorn of mankind—their proper portion. Read the daring irony of the boldest of all ante-reformation books—the Μωρίας Ἐγκώμιον ; or look at Albert Durer's still bolder wood-cuts !

So much reverence for whatever is good and holy, even if alloyed with error, attaches to the english mind, that, so long as the Oxford Tract divines were, in the public esteem, surrounded with a nimbus, their endeavours to revive the follies of a decrepit era were screened from contempt. But it will be so no longer, when themselves come to be looked upon as personally entitled to no more respect than may be due to the champions of obsolete superstitions, and when they are left to be estimated by the naked merits of their cause. As this goes on, irritation will be reverberated; nor is it now surprising that the very men whose pens dropped honey, in the earlier numbers of the Tracts for the Times, should so soon have removed all doubt as to the real quality of the doctrine they espouse.

The author of these pages would indeed have proved himself as slenderly versed in church history as his critics affirm him to be, if in fact he had failed to calculate upon the sort of treatment he was likely to receive. It was true that, for a moment, I indulged the hope that courtesy might have won courtesy; but in advancing in my task, and in becoming confirmed in the persuasion that the line of argument I have pursued could never be fairly encountered, or the general inference evaded, I have felt that one mode only of dealing with so troublesome an opponent could be looked for;—I mean that of unscrupulous misrepresentation, and virulence.

Be it so.—What remains then, is to turn to the best account the criticism with which these numbers have been, or may yet be assailed;—to meet all fair exceptions;—frankly to acknowledge every instance of incidental error;—with rigorous assiduity to pursue the main argument, to its close; and, while gladly and explicitly acknowledging the sincerity, the piety, and the general merit of many who have lived in evil times, to prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the theological, ethical, and ecclesiastical SYSTEM of those times was directly opposed to the spirit and letter of genuine christianity; which, in fact, it at length totally supplanted.

Whoever may have the credit of contributing to bring the episcopal church to this conclusion concerning the ante-papistic church—to this conclusion it will inevitably come; or if it does not, it must itself share the fate of that system.

Nothing shall induce me (or no motive I can at present think of shall induce me) to engage in a *personal* and continuous controversy (which would quickly become nothing better than a vulgar squabble) with my several assailants. To secure myself against the danger of being drawn into any thing of the sort, I shall avoid citing, or directly referring to, my critics, whether hostile, neuter, or friendly. Indeed to do so would involve a series of replies, endless, and insufferable to the public. Reviews and magazines, quarterly and monthly—newspapers, English, Irish, and American,* already make a pile on my table, to deal with which in detail, and seriatim, would fill several volumes. This method therefore, is equally undesirable in itself, and impracticable. In truth it may easily have happened that criticisms of equal merit with those which have come to hand, have not yet met, and may not at all, meet my eye.

But in looking into this pile, it appears to be susceptible of very great condensation; and I think it may, to a great extent, be disposed of by summary process.

Many pages, closely printed, and more than I have attempted to number or read, appear to have no other intention than that of running down the author, and of exhausting the anonymous writer's vexation. Of all this, and it is more than a little, I rid myself at once—by letting it alone. I have nothing to say in reply to those who honour me with the undisguised expression of their hatred. Whether or not I have done well in taking a part in the present controversy, will appear in the end; and of this, neither the author, nor his angry critics, will be the judges.

* It is a small portion only of what has appeared in America on this subject that has reached me; and thinking it likely that my english critics would leave little to be done by their transatlantic friends I have not used any means for informing myself further. A very intelligent and well informed correspondent of New York, says 'Your book has been bitterly, but, as far as I can judge, very impotently assailed, by the admirers of the Oxford Tracts, in this country.'

Again; a considerable proportion of this mass of hostile criticism consists of exemplifications of the author's alleged contradictions and inconsistencies. In much of this I have been unable to discern even the semblance of a *real* contrariety. Many of the instances that are adduced very triumphantly, are such as I should—not triumphantly indeed, but yet with some satisfaction, appeal to, as proofs of an equitable bearing toward what is good on all sides, and of an entire exemption from that sectarian narrowness, of which the examples are too frequent in these days of virulence and strife. In one word, I must assure my critics that, what may have appeared to *them* contradictory, appears so only from the vitiation of their own sight: look at an object through a contorted window-pane, and it seems double—throw up the sash, and you perceive it to be single. With minds intently fixed, through life, upon a very limited range of things, there is no 'consistency,' but that which is forced out of a determination to abide by a certain assumption—true or false. These are your 'thorough going men,' your staunch partisans, who are troubled with no inconvenient scruples, who have no reserves, no exceptions, and with whom every thing, found on one side of a certain line, is absolutely right; every thing on the other side, absolutely wrong. Nothing stirs the wrath of such persons so much as to encounter what is really catholic and comprehensive —or, call it, philosophic.

I shall give neither myself nor my reader any trouble, by attempting to rebut charges of inconsistency, such as these. But they make up perhaps a half of all that has been written against the author. Wherever a candid and intelligent reader might ask an explanation of what seems not to consist with other passages, I shall furnish the best reply I can.

Frivolous criticisms upon the meaning of phrases—that is to say, such as have been admitted to be frivolous by impartial persons, I shall deal with by *sample* only, and thus cut a short path through an interminable jungle; at the same time carefully adverting to whatever may seem to deserve or demand a distinct answer.

Additional evidence in support of certain allegations which, because not fully supported at first, have been called in question,

will dispose of many pages of criticism, and in a manner that may prove not very acceptable to those who have incautiously advanced such objections.

As yet I have seen no manly and ingenuous endeavour to encounter and overthrow the author's general argument, or to show that he is altogether and substantially in the wrong. But I am by no means disposed, while replying to a multiplicity of particular exceptions, to forego the advantage of occupying what I regard as an impregnable position; or to allow the reader's attention to be diverted from the main point in debate. To prevent this, and also at the same moment to furnish a virtual reply to an array of indefinite objections, I shall, first of all, re-state the general argument, and so sustain it by fresh evidence—evidence placed before the reader in its original terms, as to prove that, even if the entire mass of testimonies hitherto produced were abandoned, the argument holds its integrity, and may be urged anew with unabated confidence.

Having thus made good my ground, and set the principal inference (fatal to Oxford Tract doctrines) clear of all implication with particular portions of the evidence, I shall proceed to deal with the objections, hostile or amicable, of my opponents, under two or three general heads, comprehending, I hope, every article which a moderator, or umpire, would call upon me to meet.

A GENERAL REPLY TO OBJECTIONS, BY A RESTATEMENT OF THE QUESTION.

THE controversy now pending, concerning 'Church Principles,' so far as the author of these numbers has ventured to touch it, DOES NOT turn upon any such questions as those named beneath; and therefore the many pages that have been written, in the way of objection, as if it did, being wholly beside the mark, have no claim to a particular reply.—

I. The argument we have now to do with is no way dependent upon the opinion we may entertain concerning the personal piety and integrity of the illustrious men of a distant age.—

The question IS NOT

What ought to be said of Basil; or of pope Gregory, or of pope Hildebrand; but whether the SYSTEM which they severally promoted, and to which they zealously attached themselves, was such that we should do well in taking it as our model. The 'much ado,' therefore, which has been made about Cyprian, and others, is altogether irrelevant, we might say impertinent; and can serve no other purpose than that of diverting the reader's attention from *the real point at issue*. Let Cyprian or others be defended, when they, as individuals, are assailed.

II. The question IS NOT

Whether a certain amount of delinquency, or corruption of manners—less or more, attached to this or that ancient community;—But, whether the church SYSTEM of the early ages embraced elements which contravened the spirit of the christian

institute—which were at variance with explicit apostolic injunctions, and which were of a tendency that, by the experience of many centuries, and in all climates, is proved to be unfavourable to morals, nay productive of the greatest evils. It might indeed serve the urgent need of my opponents to represent the author as coming forth with a few *single instances* of delinquency, for the purpose of defaming the ancient church; and then, by showing that the case was not quite so bad as had been affirmed, to overthrow the argument. All this, again, is utterly impertinent; nor can it avail, for the purpose intended, more than for a moment. Whether this or that christian community had sustained the utmost possible damage, in its morals, or not, is a question we may go into when leisure permits. Meantime I shall always be willing to meet an opponent who will fairly and roundly deny that the ascetic philosophy, and its consequent institutions, was an element of the ancient church system; or who will undertake to prove that this philosophy, and its practices, are consonant with the spirit and letter of Holy Scripture; or *that they are part and parcel of the* ENGLISH PROTESTANT CHURCH SYSTEM (let me find a 'critic' who will meet me on *this one* point) or again; I will fairly encounter any one who is ready to affirm that the ascetic philosophy, as embodied in the institutions of the ancient church, has worked well, on the whole; and that monkery is a holy thing, which it would be wise to reinstate among ourselves. At the outset of this my Reply, I at once throw on one side, as evasive and discreditable to gentlemanly controvertists, all that has been advanced in connexion with the above named points, but not tending, even remotely, to overthrow the author's principal allegations.

III. Again: The question IS NOT

Whether the extant remains of the ancient church (of all kinds) be not of inestimable value, in relation, both to the general purposes of religious history, and to the special purposes of biblical criticism and exposition. This is not the question: how could any man in his senses deny this? It is fully admitted on all hands; but then *this sort of value* is shared by writings, orthodox and heterodox; and even christian and pagan; for Porphyry, Celsus, or Julian, may render us an aid, on points of history or

criticism, which we may not happen to receive from Basil, or Athanasius. Nor is the question whether much that is wholesome, edifying, and every way profitable, may not be gathered from the patristic remains. Who has ever questioned it? But then the same, in substance, must, in all justice, be affirmed in behalf of the divines of every other age—not excluding the very darkest eras of popery. The Fathers may be read with comfort and profit; yes, and so may some of the schoolmen; so may the Jansenists; and so, still more, may the English Puritans. Let the question be whether the Puritans, or the Jansenists, are entitled to any sort of deference, or respect, *other* than that which an impartial christian criticism would assign to them, *individually*. We suppose they are not. Then let it be shown that the Fathers of the first five centuries possess any such claim, as a body; or any claim which sets them, as such, upon a higher level than that occupied by the divines of any other period.

If an opponent will come forward and make it appear that Basil is more than Basil, Ambrose more than Ambrose, or Athanasius more than Athanasius, in *any sense*, which plain men can comprehend, then we will go into that question with all requisite assiduity; and unless the affirmative can be substantiated, I shall be at liberty to produce evidence to this effect—that Basil, Ambrose, Athanasius, and their contemporaries, notwithstanding their personal piety, and their intelligence, were, *one and all*, though in various degrees, mastered by an illusion, which had firmly possessed itself of the ancient church, and which renders them the most dangerous guides in theology, in morals, and in ecclesiastical practice, and which should bring them down in our esteem, to a level immensely below that justly occupied by the German, Swiss, and English Reformers.—I beg leave, and shall *take* the liberty to ring these six words, as a knell, in the ears of my 'critics'—themselves the professed adherents of a protestant church—NOT THE FATHERS; BUT THE REFORMERS.

IV. Once more; the question IS NOT,

Whether we should pull down one set of uninspired men, as authorities in religion, and set up another; but whether we should defer, with religious humility, to inspired men alone; receiving from others, of whatever age, just so much incidental aid as they

may be severally qualified to render. When we say therefore—'Not the Fathers, but the Reformers,' we do not intend to lift the latter to the pedestal upon which the former have so unwisely been elevated; but we addict ourselves to the latter, rather than to the former, on this very account, and because they, to a great extent, have emancipated the church from its fatal thraldom to human authority; and have done more than had ever before been attempted, or effected, toward bringing the understandings and the hearts of men back from long and fatal wanderings, to an unfeigned and unexceptive submission to the WRITTEN WILL of God.

To this point we come then; this is our key-note: to this we shall return, ever and again; and I shall, without scruple, denounce as futile and evasive, all discussions and objections not directly bearing upon it. But now, in looking through the mass of angry 'reviews' of 'Ancient Christianity,' I find it difficult to collect so much as the quantity of a page, which, in a manner creditable to divines and gentlemen, meets what every one must well know to be the question at issue.

There are indeed several cognate questions, to which we may find opportunity to advert. Such is that relative to the comparative merits of the nicene church system, and romanism:—a question of *some* importance, although not vital, in the present controversy. If it clearly appear that the nicene church system was the parent of romanism, then it becomes an affair, rather of curiosity than of practical moment, to arrange the respective claims of the Mother and Daughter.

But we turn to the principal subject; and as I propose not merely to re-state the argument, but to fortify my position by the adduction of fresh evidence, I must open the way for it by endeavouring to set the question clear of entanglement on every side. This assuredly may be done, the matter in hand being as simple and intelligible as any which fond minds have ever laboured to mystify.

A certain system or colour of theological doctrine, and a certain scheme of ritual practices and sentiments, and a certain model of ecclesiastical constitution, with its rules of discipline, are now promulgated, of which its advocates say they are not the

authors—but the restorers only. It has heretofore existed, as a whole. But when and where?

In the apostolic times and churches? This indeed is assumed; but, by the ingenuous confession of its promoters, it cannot be *proved, from the canonical writings*, to have so existed. In truth, some parts of this system are obviously so opposed to the letter and spirit of the inspired writings, that the two can never be reconciled apart from the aid, either of foreign evidence, or of some hypothesis, constructed for the purpose, and which may force them into consistency.

Does then this system come to us from the middle ages? This must not be admitted, inasmuch as we are compelled to except against the middle-age church system, on several important points.

Plainly, and by the acknowledgment and boast of its advocates, this now-revived theology—this ritual scheme, and these ecclesiastical principles, descend from times anterior to the expansion and establishment of romanism.—Let us say the times preceding the fifth general council (an. 553).

But it is not pretended that this system has floated down entire, in the memories of a succession of men; or that we may now hear and learn it, fixedly, from the lips of certain living authorities. It is to be found nowhere but in books;—that is to say, in the books which are now on our shelves, and which are now spread open to the eyes of whoever will take the pains to look into them.

These books—containing the text and exemplification of the system and principles in question—these books, definite in number, easily bought, well known, and actually found in private collections, as well as in university libraries, comprehend all the matters in debate; so that when we deal with them, as shall seem due to their merits, *we dispose of the present controversy*; and if these books, with all their merits, are found to embody a system which we must not copy, and which in Scripture is distinctly foreshown as a 'departure from the Faith,' then, so far as argument can go, there is an end of the Oxford Tract enterprise.

Or let it be supposed that, by the aid of an elaborate method of commenting upon the evidence of Scripture—lowering some things, expanding others, giving a vastly magnified importance to what is barely alluded to by the apostles, and deranging the

relative position of every thing—that, by such means, a precarious pacification of the scriptural and the patristic authorities might be effected.—Let this be done ; and then what is the consequence as it affects the Inspired Books, in their forensic aspect, that is to say, as containing a body of law? There can be no question on this point. No persons who are conversant with the principles of legal argumentation can entertain any doubt in so plain a case.—

—If there be a code and a commentary, and if the two be not clearly coincident—the commentary not being explanatory only, or serving to show how the code, in its undoubted meaning, takes hold of particular instances—if the commentary be not such, but if it be *exceptive*, if it deal in limitations, and in extensions; and if it supersede, or so far abrogate or modify statutes, as that the practical consequence of living under the code, or under the commentary, is by no means the same, then—the Commentary is the Law. The two no longer stand on the same level;—the one is brought near to us; the other recedes; the one is obsolete, the other is in force.

In such a case, those who addict themselves to the study of law, in the abstract, will indeed continue to read the code; but in halls and courts of justice, in magistrates' rooms, and when man and man are in controversy, it will be held an idle pedantry to quote the code. The commentary is what we have to do with, and that alone.

A principle so clear and unquestionable as this, the church of Rome has ingeniously recognised; and upon it boldly acts. Ambiguity, vacillation, inconsistency, are with those only who, while adhering to the commentary, are placed under some inauspicious side-long influence, compelling them to render a homage to the code, which it can never be allowed to retain, in presence of the commentary.

In any such instance of the supervention of an interpretative commentary, practically rescinding original statutes, clear-headed and honest men will scorn to employ evasive language.—They will say—The old law is good, or it *was* good once; but the commentary *is what we go by;* nor do we much trouble ourselves to ask how the old law might have affected this or that case, if there had been no commentary.

What is valid in law, must be so in theology; nay, more decisively so; for when the code and the commentary are both of human origination, there may, at all times, be room found for an open discussion of any difference appearing between the two: the two being homogeneous. But if the code be divine, and the commentary (by confession) human, and if nevertheless the latter be admitted to supersede, or practically to modify the former, it must do so by virtue of a dispensing power, of such weight and efficacy as must restrict and totally exclude all discussion. In any instance in which we might be tempted to go into a discussion of the difference between the *divine* code, and the *human* commentary, we have no alternative but either to denounce the commentary as an impious usurpation, or to submit to it implicitly, as paramount to the divine. Who shall not tremble before a power which assumes the right to abrogate a *divine* law?

This the church of Rome has fully understood in her controversy with 'heretics.' To contradict Scripture may have been a fault; but to contradict the 'church,' is always blasphemy.

We may easily bring these plain principles to the test of an instance:—

If Matthew Henry's Exposition be any thing more to me than a very good and learned man's opinion of the meaning of Scripture—if it be *any thing* more, it is SCRIPTURE to me;—it is my Bible, my law, my creed. But put the name of Ambrose in the place of that of Matthew Henry, and does logic demand a different conclusion?

Ambrose may be more to my taste than Matthew Henry—this is a question of private inclination! But if any *essential condition* distinguishes the interpretations of the bishop of Milan, from those of the nonconforming pastor of Chester, then that condition, bearing upon the religious use I am to make of the writings of the former, operates, so far as it goes, to remove the Scriptures from my eye, as the rule of belief and duty. Bring it to a matter of fact.—The Inspired Rule says, Let a bishop be a married man;—Ambrose says, Nay, not so; it is *better*, at least, that he be a cœlebs; or if he be married, let him live apart from his wife. The Scripture says, There is one Mediator between God and man, virtually forbidding our applying to any other.

The doctors of the ancient church tell us that the saints in heaven and especially the Mother of God, are efficacious intercessors with God; and they set us the example of commending petitions to this celestial suffragation.

These two diverse Rules cannot both be Law; one must be law obsolete, the other, a statute in force. The one may be reverently spoken of, but the other must be obeyed. Although the one continue to be called *law*, and the other is called *interpretation*, it is the interpretation that actually regulates belief and practice:—that is to say, if the interpretation be put forth as *any thing more* than 'such a one's opinion.' The present controversy turns entirely upon this—*something more*, which is alleged to attach to the interpretations that are gathered from the patristic volumes.

If it be said that the legislative value, assumed to float somewhere within these volumes, actually belongs only to those things concerning which there appears a universal consent, and which therefore may be presumed to have come down from inspired sources, although they be not recorded in the canon of Scripture; then, if we confine ourselves to the extant writings of the earliest times, they are too few, and too vague and ambiguous, to sustain a fifth part of what is included in the scheme of church principles, as now revived. But if we come down lower, and include the writings of a later age—say, the fourth and fifth centuries, which are copious enough for the purpose, then these writings, with unanimous consent, recommend notions and practices so glaringly at variance with the spirit and letter of Scripture that, if we are to receive them, it must be on the ground of an hypothesis which allows the Fathers, in a sovereign manner, to overrule, and abrogate, the decisions of the Apostles.

It will not be admissible to place these two authorities side by side, and to say to the people—You are at liberty to yield to which you please; for this would be to nullify *law*, altogether. Law says, Do this, or abide by the consequences of disobedience. Where a man may do as he pleases, he is not under law.

No suavities of phrase, no blinding of the plain truth by gentle circumlocutions, will make any difference, if in fact the interpretation of a statute is to take effect, rather than the statute itself. The expositor may be pleased to say—I *think* this is the sense of

Scripture; or I *humbly* think it; but if those who hear this opinion have nothing to do but to accept it, and to conform themselves thereto—then it is law to them, however smoothly worded.

It would be doing an injury to the reputation of the illustrious men whose writings are in question, if we were to speak as if they had claimed, in their own behalf, any such power to interpret Scripture, despotically; or to legislate for the church in all following ages. They do no such thing. Whatever may have been their faults, *this* impiety is not of the number. It is altogether the product of the wicked despotism of a late age. None do the Fathers so grievous a wrong as do those modern champions of church principles who are attributing to them an authority which they themselves religiously disclaim. Who are the enemies of the Fathers?—the men who now are thrusting them, by violence, and against their solemn protest, into Christ's throne.

The harsh treatment to which these good, but greatly erring men must unavoidably be exposed, in the rude struggle which is yet before us, for rescuing apostolic christianity, cannot but do an injury to their just reputation. In proving them to have grossly perverted the gospel, and to be among the worst guides which the church can follow, we are driven to the necessity of producing evidence which no motive less imperative would have led us to bring forward. The same happens in every analogous instance; to thrust a man into a position not due to him, is to expose him to the peril of being treated ignominiously.

Let it then be clearly understood that, in vigorously contending, as we shall, for the paramount and *unshared* authority of the Inspired Writings, and in demonstrating that the strongest and most peremptory reasons of *fact*, as well as *principle*, forbid the attempt to conjoin the records of the ancient church with them, we are at war, NOT WITH THE MEN whose writings are in question, but with those ill-advised champions of church power, in modern times, who have put these writings in the room of God's word. It is the modern mystery of wickedness, not so much the ancient error, which we are labouring to overthrow.

As a general, and I honestly believe, a conclusive reply to the greater part of what has been advanced in the several criticisms of the preceding numbers, I propose to show that, even if the whole

of the evidence already adduced were liable to objection (no one will imagine that I mean to grant this) yet the argument founded upon that evidence would remain entire, inasmuch as it may be made good, without any difficulty, from other sources.

That this is not affirming too much I hope at length to prove by various citations, so laid before the reader, as shall exempt the author from all responsibility, except that of a mere copyist. —At present, I shall cite only so much as may illustrate the re-statement I am making of the argument.

Assuming then, That the pending controversy, so far as I am concerned with it, is open to the ordinary methods of historical investigation, and may be disposed of in a peremptory mode after due inquiry; and assuming also—

That the subject matter of the controversy is comprised within the Ecclesiastical Remains of the first five or six centuries; and also—

That the question, broadly expressed, is—Whether or not, some sort of authoritative value attaches to, or is embedded within, these Remains, such as does not belong to the various religious writings of our own, or of other eras; then I presume that this higher value, whatever it may be, or however defined, must be made to rest upon one of these three grounds; or partly upon each;—as first, upon that of

The alleged FACT, that the ancient church, as represented, or as reported to us by the extant writers of those ages (including ecclesiastical documents of all kinds) was in a condition of such pre-eminent purity, both doctrinal and practical, as compared with the modern church, or the church of any intervening time, that its opinions, usages, decisions, and general sentiments, are entitled to our reverent and submissive regard; and may, with much advantage to ourselves, be set up as our pattern.

Now it is plain that, to disprove *this* allegation, it *cannot* be logically required of us to show that the ancient church was in fact far *inferior* to the modern, or to any other church. It rests with those who take *this* ground to make out their case, by positive, unexceptionable evidence; and to show that this evidence is not nullified by opposite testimony.

But if this allegation, as to the Fact, is not hazarded, then an

opponent must, as it appears, resort to some Hypothesis, or to some Theory, which, like that of the papacy, shall suffice for saving the authoritative value of the ecclesiastical records, notwithstanding any proof of the corrupted, or even debauched condition of the church at particular times:—for instance, an HYPOTHESIS such as this—

That the apostolic mind, relating to points nowhere handled in the canonical writings, but orally transmitted, may be collected from the extant ecclesiastical records; and that, when so collected, it carries with it all the authority which can attach to the text of the Gospels and Epistles, inasmuch as it is the same in substance, and in its source; differing merely in the mode of conveyance. If it be found, either that this hypothesis cannot be made good; or that we cannot practically avail ourselves of it, then our last resource, so far as I can see, or have been able to gather from the statements of the Oxford Tract writers, must be a THEORY, such as this—

That Christ's promise to be with his ministers to the end of the world, involves a direct (not to say supernatural) controlling and emanative influence, resident with *a visible community*, preserving its legitimate functionaries from all serious error, and enabling them so to adapt his institutions to the changing circumstances of every age, as that what the church decrees, at any time, is to be submitted to as if uttered from Heaven, and is not less binding on the conscience than so many texts of Scripture:—it is a running authority.

This is nearly the theory of the papacy; but how it can be entertained by those who have exercised their private judgment on the decisions of the church; or on what principle the promised supernatural presence is confined to the church of the first five centuries, does not appear; nor have I anywhere seen an attempt made to reconcile it, either with protestantism, or with the principle of an exclusive regard to the records of the *ancient* church.

But we will now strictly attend to these three suppositions, in their order: and *first* the supposition, as an historical Fact, that the reverence claimed for the remains of christian antiquity is due to them on the ground of the pre-eminent sanctity and

doctrinal perfection of the ancient—that is to say, the nicene church, of which they are the memorials.

Only let it be shown that no such decisive pre-eminence can be believed to have attached to the ancient church, and then the wished-for inference, on the ground of Fact, is excluded. There can be no *argumentative necessity* for proving that the ancient church stood far below the mean level of excellence. Yet if *this* can be proved — if it appears incontestably, then this proof—superfluous in regard to the first allegation, will be available in dealing with the second, and with the third; for although the Theory of church principles pretends to carry us clear over all such difficulties, yet ordinary minds will not soon be reconciled to the supposition that a body, like the romish church under Innocent III. was really Christ's organ, and his only representative on earth.

Let me then pointedly and again remind my many assailants, that they have, one and all, totally misunderstood (or misrepresented) the drift of my argument, as touching the question of Fact. *This* argument *does not demand* proof of a condition grossly corrupt; but it is conclusively established when the pretended eminent and supernatural sanctity of the ancient church is shown not to have existed. To extenuate therefore the evidences of corruption, or to prove that they should have been more leniently interpreted, is to go beside the mark. What these writers were bound to do was to establish the Fact which they have wished the world should believe on their bare word. I very well know that my opponents will reserve to themselves the liberty of sliding, as occasion may be, from the ground of Fact, to that of Theory; and especially that, when driven, as they must be, from the former, they will make a stand on the latter, until the turn comes for needing a refuge thence also. To prevent this, as far as possible, I shall, at each step of this re-statement of the argument, recall the reader's attention to the particular object we are pursuing.

Let it be supposed that a claim of reverential submission were advanced on behalf of a certain remote christian community, and that, while this claim is yet under discussion, a passage, such as the following, is produced, and which appears to have issued from

a well-informed and upright member of that community. How does it bear upon the question? Precisely as those evidences, heretofore, and now presently to be adduced, bear upon the *question of fact*, concerning the alleged pre-eminent sanctity of the ancient church.—It disproves the allegation, and it does so, even after every reasonable allowance for over-statements has been made:—no *such* affirmations could have been advanced, or could have been listened to, within a church *pre-eminently* holy.

"A second cause of our distress is, the laxity of discipline and morals of the religionists of our day. The professors of the leading denominations of the christian world are certainly in a state of deterioration. There is a declension among professors. Time was when you could discover a professor of religion from a man of the world, by his external appearance, by an air of sanctity, of non-conformity with the world, by some characteristic mark or badge, of his belonging to the kingdom of Christ. But now, not only in our church, but in other societies which once laid peculiar claims to strictness and non-conformity to the world, there has been a marked and melancholy decline in spirituality, and also in integrity, and in the honesties of social life. Sanctity of external demeanour, and plainness of garb, are not, of themselves, a sufficient guarantee of integrity, and fair and honourable dealing in the affairs of the commercial world.

"A third cause is the neglect of public worship, and the profanation of the sabbath. Our city bears a deplorable character amid the sister cities of our land. There are comparatively but few people in our city who regularly attend a place of worship. In this city, which contains so many splendid and commodious churches, and places appropriated to divine service, there are not half of the inhabitants who avail themselves of those spiritual advantages. It is said by the officers of the Philadelphia Tract Society, that, in our city and suburbs, there are at least one hundred and twenty thousand persons that do not attend public worship. And what are those church-neglecting people doing? They are idling their time, or they are doing the work which should be done on the week-day, or they are at the tavern or reading room, or they are crowding the rail-car or the steam-boat; and cars and omnibuses, and hacks are rattling over our streets, as if there were no sabbath to hallow, and no God to worship and obey. Surely God will be avenged on us for these sins, these our dark and evil doings. 'The Lord hath a controversy with us, and he is pleading with Israel!'" *

Let us suppose the above statement to be corroborated by various independent evidences, all having the same general complexion. It would not therefore follow that there can be no eminently good men within such a community:—we should suppose there might be many; and yet must consider such a report to be

* From an American Episcopal Paper, of the present year.

absolutely conclusive against the alleged exemplary sanctity of that community. At the very best it must rather claim indulgence, than demand reverence. But we may imagine that this sufficient reply were not accepted; and that the unwise endeavour to set up the practices and opinions of the transatlantic church, as of equal authority with the Scriptures themselves, were persisted in.

We should then be compelled to go a step further; not indeed as if we wished to blacken the church in question; but merely intending to expose the foolish superstition of its admirers, among ourselves. With this view we allege the fact of the existence of slavery, and under highly aggravating circumstances, in America. —Slavery, protected by ferocious enactments—slavery, shedding the worst sentiments of pride and cruelty, as well through the religious, as the irreligious portion of the people.—Slavery, gloried in, and practised, and traded with, by clergy and church officers. Now this further fact we appeal to, not as if it proved that there is no piety on the other side the Atlantic.—We better know how to make allowance for other men's views of what appears to us utterly wrong. But we confidently appeal to it *first*, as a proof—knowing what is so well known of the invariable tendency of slavery —that no such exalted excellence, as has been alleged, can really belong to a christian community labouring under so heavy a disadvantage: *secondly*, as the sure indication of some capital vice or deficiency, in its doctrinal and ethical system; and *thirdly*, as a sufficient reason for rejecting the hypothesis that the Lord himself is, in some peculiar and extraordinary manner, present with that church, thence, and by that medium, issuing his commands to all other churches.

In such a case it would clearly be a mere evasion to attempt to show that many of the stories which are commonly told of the horrors of American slavery are unfounded, or have been much exaggerated.—We repeat these plain questions—Do you mean to deny *the fact* of the existence of slavery among the American christians?—Do you mean to say that, under all its circumstances, it is a holy institution, which we should do well to import into England? Are you prepared to affirm that men are worthy of our profound reverence, as christians, who are every day dealing in

men and women, and who are so dealing with them, as if they were cattle? If you do not intend, either to deny the general fact, or to affirm that slavery is of a happy moral tendency, then what avails all your quibbling about particular instances of alleged abuses, in which more than can be positively proved may have been advanced? Such quibbling, in such a case, would be worse than idle: it would be disingenuous and delusive. Instead of blindly following a church so contaminated, and instead of regarding its decisions as if they came fresh from heaven, or setting before ourselves its practices, as models of perfection, we shall rather use the utmost caution in accepting, even what appears to be good, from such a source.

But yet further, let us suppose that, in opposition to its admirers, there are certain religious bodies on this side the Atlantic, who loudly denounce the American slavery, and repeatedly call upon their brethren to abandon it.* Now in reply to such a protest, the American pastors do nothing more than send over an assortment of theological folios—the compositions of some of their body, and generally approved of by the laity; and then say—'See what books we write, and what we read, in America!—look into them;—say if they are not orthodox, if they are not learned, if they do not breathe a heavenly temper:—examine these volumes, and then blush for yourselves, in having arraigned us as unchristian in conduct!' This would be regarded as a very sorry defence, at once inconclusive, and evasive. It would be thought so, even if the 'Library' of these transatlantic 'Fathers' contained works as edifying as are, 'The Confessions of St. Augustine,' or 'The Catechetical Lectures, of St. Cyril of Jerusalem,'

* 'That while we rejoice in the fact of many of the ministers and other members of our denomination in America having given in their adhesion to the righteous principle of immediate and entire abolition,—a principle so consonant to the spirit, and so clearly deducible from the precepts of our holy faith—we deeply deplore that the great majority of our churches in that country are still, either directly engaged in upholding the slave system, or by their supineness and silence are lending it the aid of a most criminal neutrality. That we deem their conduct in this respect the more culpable from the increased attention which the subject has recently obtained, the awful disclosures of the enormity of slavery which have been made, and the faithful, earnest, and beseeching exhortations with which they have been plied.'—*A recent 'Resolution.'*

or 'The Treatises of St. Cyprian,' and the 'Homilies of St. Chrysostom.'

Such are the main circumstances of the pending controversy concerning the alleged pre-eminent sanctity of the ancient church, and the authority assumed to attach to its opinions and practices; and such is the drift of the objections, almost in every instance, that have been advanced against what I have already written. Put the unquestionable evidence of a very low state of morals, in the ancient church, in the room of the evidence adduced, as to the actual state of the American churches; and put the existence, and the attested corruptions of monkery and asceticism in the room of the American slavery; and then the two cases are logically parallel. In the preceding numbers I have affirmed, and have I think proved, that the ancient church, notwithstanding the piety and devotedness of many of its members, was very far from being such as its modern admirers have assumed; and that several special reasons utterly forbid our bowing to it submissively, or receiving from it even what is good, without the most watchful caution. My opponents have rushed forward with sundry proofs tending to show—'That things were not *quite so bad* as has been affirmed!'

We shall presently examine, with the utmost strictness, the alleged *hypothesis*, and the alleged *theory*, on the ground of which church principles may be thought to be defensible, even if the ground of *fact* were to be abandoned. But we have now to adduce evidence touching the fact. Let me repeat it — in our present argument we are not compelled to prove the nicene era to have been *worse* than any other:—our inference stands firm unless it can be shown to have been far better.

That extraordinary corruption of principles and manners which is confessed to have attached to the church at the close of the *sixth* century, is not easily to be reconciled with the supposition of an extraordinary purity attaching to the *fourth*. But when the proof of this wide-spread profligacy, and of an almost universal diffusion of fanaticism and superstition, is found to belong to the middle of the *fifth*, then such a supposition appears scarcely credible. Could that system have been a wisely constructed one, or could it have been in a healthful condition, if, instead of carrying itself

forward, at least during a half century, it was *instantly* succeeded by the most extreme dissoluteness? If the church of the fourth century was in fact what some now seem to imagine, how came it in the fifth to be what we find it? Had all continuity of principle been suddenly destroyed? did the sons universally disgrace the training they had received from their fathers? It will be found that we are not compelled to adopt any such strange supposition: the transition was natural, and by no means abrupt. Nothing had happened but what might have been anticipated. To imagine that the Gospel, when despoiled of its glory, might yet operate efficaciously in reforming the world, would be to assume that even its first principles are, in a practical sense, matters of indifference.

It need not here be shown what were the morals and the manners of the civilized world under the influence of the polytheism of Greece and Rome. By the promulgation of christianity, during the first hundred years from the death of the apostles, a visible and hopeful impression was made upon the sentiments and practices of, perhaps, a half of the community, in all countries around the Mediterranean. The superstition and fanaticism with which we have now to do (the church principles of the Oxford Tract writers) then gained an ascendency, superseding everywhere (a few spots excepted) the doctrine and morality of Christ; and at the end of another hundred years the nations are found to be in full course toward that stage of desperate corruption which they had reached in the fifth century.

What the state of morals really was, within the professedly christian world, in the east, in the west, and in north Africa, about the middle of the fifth century, or at the moment when the nicene divines had just receded from their places, we may learn, in all its details, from the pages of a writer who was in his prime, at that time; and who, although not often mentioned by modern writers, and actually read, perhaps, by very few, better deserves a perusal than many of his more favoured predecessors. We shall find however that his singular merits have not escaped the notice of eminent critics.

SALVIAN, a presbyter (not bishop, as some have erroneously affirmed) of Marseilles, is believed to have finished the treatise on

which his reputation chiefly rests, and which we are about to cite, in the year 440. He survived the publication of it many years; although not to the period which has absurdly been asserted. The report he makes of the condition of the christian world belongs therefore to the *early part of the fifth* century; that is to say, the time when Augustine's principal works were composed. Salvian was a native of Cologne; but he had resided some time at Treves, where he married a lady of gentile parentage, by whom he had a daughter. Travelling south, he came first to Vienne, then to Marseilles, where he was ordained priest; and in consequence, after the fashion of the age, he separated himself from his wife.*

The romish writers, and Bellarmine especially, resent Salvian's honesty, and such is the feeling which connects the champions of the same cause, in every age, that it is probable his testimony will be resisted by our modern Bellarmines. Meantime impartial writers acknowledge his integrity, and assign him no mean praise. So much of Cave's account of him I subjoin as concerns our present purpose.† Gennadius, also of Marseilles, and who flourished a few years later, says of him, 'humanâ et divina literaturâ instructus, et, ut absque invidiâ loquar, episcoporum magister.' 'Eximius Scriptor, Salvianus, sane diligenti lectione dignus est.' Joseph Scaliger calls him, 'Scriptorem Christianissimum.'—'Salvianum vero qui pluris faciat quàm ipse facio,' says Casaubon, 'non facilè invenias.'‡

This writer, by his good judgment, his scriptural fervour, and manifest sincerity, as well as by the proofs he affords of an acquaintance with the open world, inspires confidence. He was

* The joint epistle of Salvian and his wife Palladia (Epist. iv.) to her parents, who were incensed at the vow of continence which their daughter and granddaughter had been persuaded to take, is every way curious, as illustrating the temper of the times, and as a singular instance of eloquent ingenuity, employed to contravene at once the dictates of nature, and the express enactment of God.—1 Cor. vii. 5.

† Salvianus, gente non quidem Afer, ut quidam volunt, sed Gallus, ipsomet Galliam solum patrium appellante ..... Claruit ab anno 440, et deinceps magis magisque inclarescere cœpit. ..... Obiit grandævus, exeunte, ut videtur, sæculo. Hist. Lit. p. 279.

‡ Quoted by Blount, Censura, p. 213, and by the editor of Salvian, C Rittershusius.

not the mere creature of the cloister; for, as a layman, he had mixed with men of all conditions, on even terms. He did not enter the church till middle life, and he therefore brought with him, not only a personally-acquired knowledge of the world; but a free and ripened judgment. It is true that, at least in his after years, he conformed himself to the distorted notions prevalent in his times; and, in a treatise (Contra Avaritiam) of later date than the one now to be quoted, he goes a great length in urging those false maxims of morality which the church had then adopted.

The Treatise on Providence, or, de Gubernatione Dei, appeared ten years only after the death of Augustine; twenty-eight years after the publication of the Civitas Dei; twenty years after the death of Jerome; and during the life-time of several writers ordinarily appealed to as authorities, along with the nicene fathers, such as Isidore, Vincent of Lerins, Theodoret, Socrates, Sozomen, and Leo the Great. We are therefore in this instance coming as near to the nicene age as we ought to come, if we would fairly estimate the moral condition of the church, considered as the *product* of the doctrines it promoted, and which were its characteristics, and which, in the main, are the very points now in controversy, and now in course of being substituted for the doctrines of the Reformation.

Salvian, like Augustine when he composed the Civitas Dei, felt the weight of those objections which, it appears, were then frequently urged against the christian doctrine of a particular providence, and which drew their force from the disorders that troubled, and from the wide-spread corruptions that disgraced, the then professedly christian world. 'If there be a sovereign and righteous administration of human affairs, and if this administration be in the hands of Him of whom you say that he is ever with the church, and is now speaking through its ministers, how are we to understand the actual course of affairs, or what are we to think of the condition of the church itself?' Augustine's reply to such objections is elaborate and refined. Salvian takes lower ground, and, in a style of plain good sense, meets the cavil in this way.—'You think there can be no divine government of human affairs, inasmuch as the professed servants of God obtain no favour at his hands; and that the church itself is left to its fate.—But

see what christians actually are, everywhere, and then ask whether, under the administration of a righteous and holy God, such men can expect any favour? What happens every day, under our eyes, is rather an evidence of the doctrine of Providence, as it exhibits the divine displeasure, provoked by the debauchery of the church itself.'

The purport of very many pages of this treatise, which however it will be necessary to cite at some length, is condensed in the following sentences: 'Quotusquisque est,' asks Salvian, 'qui non se luto fornicationis involvat? Et quid plura? Grave et luctuosum est quod dicturus sum. IPSA DEI ECCLESIA, quæ in omnibus esse debet placatrix Dei, quid est aliud quàm exacerbatrix Dei? aut, præter *paucissimos quosdam*, qui mala fugiunt, quid est aliud penè omnis cœtus christianorum, quam sentina vitiorum? . . . . . In hanc enim morum probrositatem propè omnis ecclesiastica plebs redacta est, ut in cuncto populo Christiano, genus quodammodo sanctitatis sit, minus esse vitiosum!'

Assuredly no such expressions as these could be applied, even by the most splenetic modern writer, to the christian community of our own times, and in this country. The most prejudiced censor of the 'religious world,' if he knows what he is speaking of, must admit that the general tone of morals in England and Scotland gives good evidence of the efficacious influence of christianity; and that there are many more than the 'paucissimi quidam,' in all communions among us, whose lives, though not faultless, are, in the main, pure. If then Salvian's representations shall appear to be correct, there will be no room to deny the superiority, as to piety and morality, of our own times: in other words, it will be a simple matter of fact that the Reformation has worked better than did nicene church principles;—that christianity, as restored by the Reformers, has gradually regenerated the countries which have freely entertained it; while, on the contrary, christianity, as debased by the nicene divines, after quickly spending its healthful forces, only served to hurry the nations downward into—to use Salvian's language, 'a sink of debauchery.' In taking this review we shall become better qualified to form an opinion of the wisdom of the enterprise now in progress for carrying the church backward, fourteen hundred years.

But be it remembered *our immediate argument* demands nothing beyond the proof necessary for showing that the ancient church cannot claim our submissive reverence on the ground of its alleged *pre-eminent* sanctity.

Salvian's Preface dedicatory bespeaks the good man, bold from a sense of duty, and coming forward to urge useful, but very unpalatable truths, upon the consciences of his contemporaries. His language is not that of his times;—it is the language of honesty and of calm seriousness;—it is moreover wholly devoid of the animation of fanatical excitement. He is the very writer whom an historical inquirer, sickened with delusion, and with the attempt to delude, welcomes with a cordial greeting. The evidence of one such writer is worth more (if we ourselves be searching for truth) than many folios of devout declamation. 'Omnes enim,' says he, 'in scriptis suis causas tantum egerunt suas, et propriis magis laudibus quàm aliorum utilitatibus consulentes, non id facere adnisi sunt, ut salubres ac salutiferi, sed ut scholastici ac diserti haberentur . . . . . in scriptiunculis *nostris* non lenocinia esse volumus sed remedia, quæ scilicet non tàm otiosorum auribus placeant, quàm ægrotorum mentibus prosint, magnum ex utraque re cœlestibus donis fructum reportaturi.' This writer, throughout the treatise now before us, speaks as to the *sick;* nor is it possible to believe that he is feigning the facts he alleges; nor is his tone splenetic; and in all instances he loudly challenges the consciences of men to attest the truth of his heaviest criminations.

I shall do the best I can, within the compass of a few pages, to present the general purport of this writer's evidence, touching the state of the christian community in his times; condensing what is much amplified; and, by omitting virtual repetitions, give the reader the historical substance of the treatise; at the same time laying before him Salvian's own words,* to such an extent at least, as will I think relieve me from any very weighty responsibility, as to the general fidelity of my report.

The author, in the first and second books, establishes the doctrine of the divine government of the world; that is to say, as well the Gubernatio, as the Judicium, on the ground of reason,

* The original passages will be found in the Supplement to this number, where not on the page itself.

by an adduction of examples, and by an appeal to the testimony of the Scriptures;—ratione, exemplis, et testimoniis. Having done this, in a manner which he confidently assumes to be conclusive, he advances with so much the more calmness to a consideration of the difficulties that beset the doctrine.—If it be so, that the world is governed by a good and holy God—the christian's God, how is it that the condition of barbarous nations is by far better than our own; cur melior multo sit barbarorum conditio quàm nostra, (p. 66); and why, even among ourselves, is the lot of the good harder than that of the wicked? Such inquiries the author does not hold himself *bound* to meet, otherwise than by peremptorily referring to the abstract truth, as already established: and besides, who shall dare to penetrate the secret reasons of the divine mind? he insists, however, upon the topics ordinarily adverted to in explanation of such difficulties, and in doing so takes occasion to define the christian character:—a christian is one who is found faithful to Christ, and obedient to the divine commands, and who proves himself a good steward of the benefits entrusted to his care: and what are these?—the Law, the Gospel, the Prophets, the Apostolic writings (lectiones) the gift of the new birth, the grace of holy baptism, the unction of the divine chrism (*not* extreme unction, but that of initiation.)

'Those who are faithless to this trust are *infidels*, whatever may be their profession. And who then is faithful? Who regards even the most explicit of his Lord's commands?—to wit,' &c. . . . . Among his illustrations, Salvian refers to Paul's assertion that thrice he had suffered shipwreck. 'Well then, at last, if we fail in all other apostolic virtues, yet in this point we may make our boast, inasmuch as it is not thrice, but constantly that we christians are making shipwreck. In tantum quippe vitiosè ab omnibus vivitur, ut prope *nullus* christianorum sit, qui non jugiter naufragare videatur.' P. 78. But you say, 'Christians in these times are not called upon to endure persecutions—princes themselves being christians.—True; but do christians yield obedience to their Lord in those things which are of perpetual obligation? Who is it that patiently relinquishes his cloak? Where are they to be found who yield to the spoiler? nay, where are any who do not endeavour to make reprisals upon their adversaries? So far

is it from being true that we resign, with the cloak, aught beside —if by any means we can, we snatch from others coat and cloak too.' P. 79. 'And so as to smiting.—Who is there that, if he receives a blow, will not return many for one? and far from offering the other cheek to the smiter, that he might so conquer, he cannot be satisfied in smiting merely, but must slay his adversary.

'Well enough we seem to understand *one* half of the Lord's command—'Whatsoever ye would,' &c. but we appear utterly ignorant (happy were we if ignorant indeed) of the other—'do ye the same to them.' Alas! instead of seeking the advantage of others, we seek our own at their cost! But you say these commands are such as none can possibly obey.—Are you indeed at liberty to make your choice among your Lord's injunctions? The Saviour has forbidden christian men to swear. But you may find more who often perjure themselves, than who swear not at all. He says, 'Curse not;' but of whom is not the speech a cursing?

'How can we wonder that God does not hearken to our prayers, seeing that we listen not to his commands? not merely do we neglect what is enjoined; but, with our utmost endeavour, we do the very contrary. God commands us to love one another; we rend each other. He commands us all to impart of our substance to the needy; we encroach upon each other's rights. God commands that the christian should be pure, even as to the eye; but who among us does not roll himself in the mire of fornication? and what more? alas how grievous and doleful is what I am to say! — The very church of God, which in all things ought to be the pacificatrix of God, what in fact is she but the provoker of God? And a very few excepted, who flee from evil, what else is almost every assembly of christians, than a sink of vices? For you will find in the church scarcely one who is not either a drunkard, or a glutton, or an adulterer, or a fornicator, or a ravisher, or a frequenter of brothels, or a robber, or a manslayer;—and what is worse than all—almost all these without limit. I put it now to the consciences of all christian folks, whether it be not so, that you will barely find one who is not addicted to some of the vices and crimes which I have mentioned: or

rather who is it that is not guilty of all? Truly you will more easily find the man who is guilty of *all*, than one who is guilty of *none*. As to this—*none*, my imputations perhaps may seem too serious: I will go further;—sooner will you find those chargeable with every crime, than any not chargeable with all;—sooner those addicted to the greatest crimes, than those guilty of the less. I mean to say—more are living in the perpetration of the greater as well as of the lighter vices, than of the lighter alone. Into this shameless dissoluteness of manners (morum probrositatem) is nearly the entire ecclesiastical mass so sunk, that, throughout the christian community, it has come to be regarded as a species of sanctity, if one is a little less vicious than others. And so it is that the churches, or rather the temples and altars of God, are by some held in less reverence than the most inferior courts and common magistrates' rooms. . . . .'

'The churches,' says our author, 'are outraged by indecencies, and by the irreverence of those who rush thence, after the formal confession of their past sins, to the perpetration of more. You may well imagine what men have been thinking about at church, when you see them hurry off, some to plunder, some to get drunk, some to practise lewdness, some to rob on the highway.

'But it may be thought, perhaps, that the crimes and depravity I have spoken of attach only to certain slaves, and to a few persons of the lowest condition. No noble name, surely, is blotted by disgraces such as these! What else but fraud and perjury is the course of life of all traders? What but iniquity, that of those attached to halls and courts? What but false accusation, that of officials? What but rapine that of all the military? But you imagine perhaps that these alleged vices are such only as must be expected from men in their several professions. You say the behaviour of such men is only answerable to their profession; nor is it to be wondered at if they are found to act in character.—As if, truly, God willed any (in the way of their calling) to do or profess what is wicked! . . . . . If so, the greater portion of mankind would be excused, on the plea of their profession. . . . But you say the body of nobility is altogether free from these crimes. Far is this from being the fact. . . . . For who is there,

whether among the noble, or among the rich (and it is one of the miseries of these times that none is accounted so noble as he who has amassed the greatest wealth) who is there that shudders at crime? But I am wrong—many shudder indeed at crimes, yet very few avoid them. At the vices of others they are shocked—themselves practising the same! Strangely are they seen, now accusing the guilty, now, excusing themselves. They execrate openly, what they perpetrate secretly; and in this way, while they believe that they are condemning others, they the more condemn themselves. . . . . But who is there, whether rich or noble, preserving innocency, nay holding back his hand from crimes of every kind? It were superfluous to speak of *all* crimes. Would they were clear from the greatest. As to the less, I will say nothing, and especially as our great folks may think themselves privileged to indulge in smaller offences. Let us see then whether any of this rank can plead exemption from one of these two capital crimes—murder and adultery.* Who is there that, if his hands do not reek with human blood, is not soiled with foul impurities? and yet, though one of these burdens is enough to sink a man to perdition, hardly is there a rich man who is not chargeable with both. . . . . .

'What benefit can we think to derive from the holy name of christian, without the manners of a christian, seeing that a life at variance with the profession nullifies, by the pravity of our unworthy conduct, the honour due to the appellation. Wherefore, inasmuch as scarcely any one part of the christian community, scarcely any one corner of the churches, anywhere, is not full of offence, or not blotted with the stain of mortal sin, what room have we for flattering ourselves with an assumption of the christian name? And especially as we are only so much the more guilty in doing so much discredit to that sacred name. Sinning, as we do, under the obligations of religion, we only the more mock God.' †

* As the writer is here explicitly speaking of the *greatest* enormities, these two words *homicidium* and *stuprum*, must be understood to carry the heaviest meaning that belongs to them.

† These citations are from the third book. The original of the principal passages will be found in the Supplement.

Our author pursues his argument, the drift of which is to convict his contemporaries, universally, of such flagrant contrarieties to Christ's declared will, as must deprive them of the right to avail themselves of the name of christians, or to hope for any favour from heaven.

'With so general a consent do we all follow our sins, as if we sinned from a deep and well-considered conspiracy, so to do.' (P. 102.) 'The dæmons are ferocious and tremble, thou art like them ferocious, but yet tremblest not!' 'Some indeed—quidam sunt, sed paucissimi—a very few there are, who may be excepted from the general crimination.' (P. 107.) 'Is it the slaves whom we should chiefly inculpate, accusing them of running away from their masters, and of theft, and lying? What impels them to desert, but the severity of their masters? Why do they steal, but because left to suffer want? Why do they lie, but in terror of the tortures they are liable to? Siquidem dum tormentis se volunt eximere, mentiuntur. But you noble!—are you clear? Et quod paucos excipio, utinam plures atque omnes excipi liceret. Salus erat omnium, innocentia plurimorum. . . . . Si enim extra conscientiam suam sunt quæcunque dico, nequaquam ad injuriam ejus spectant cuncta quæ dico. Si autem in se esse novit quæ loquor, non à mea sibi hoc lingua dici æstimet, sed à conscientia sua.' (P. 110.) 'But why speak of things hidden, when the robberies of the rich are manifest? Where is the poor man who may remain safe and unhurt near to a rich man?' Salvian then indignantly, and with admirable courage, arraigns persons in power, as devastators of the countries over which they are placed, and as relentless extortioners. Ut pauci illustrentur, mundus evertitur. Unius honor orbis excidium est.' . . . . 'Murder, which is rare among slaves, restrained by the fear of punishment, is frequent among the rich, who confide in impunity.—But perhaps I am wrong in speaking of murder, in the rich, as a *sin*, inasmuch as, when they slaughter their slaves, they reckon it an exercise of right, not a crime; and a like privilege they claim in behalf of their impurities.' . . . . . P. 113.

In attestation of his general indictment of all ranks, Salvian descends to details, the naming of which could not have been tolerated if the facts had not been notorious and beyond dispute.

Even in the worst times there is conscience enough in men to impel them to respect the bold reprover of their crimes. Salvian obtained this respect from his contemporaries, and was highly esteemed by all who retained any sense of virtue. But could it have been so, if the heavy charges he advances in these pages had been gross exaggerations, or mere calumnies? Yet for the condition of society which he paints, we can find a parallel only in the most debauched countries of the modern world;—those where romanism has long ruled without restraint—countries from which the purifying influence of genuine christianity has been utterly excluded. And such was christendom at the close of the nicene era!

Our author's description of abounding rapine, and unbridled lust, perpetrated by men in authority, and imitated by their underlings—all frequenters of the church, and participants of the sacraments, are the proper comments on the doctrine then everywhere taught:—but of this more presently.

It is from incidental notices, which may easily be overlooked, that the truth, concerning antiquity, is to be gathered—or one might say *extorted*, when church affairs are in question. No such thing would be supposed, when we have before us the magniloquent pages of the ascetics, as that, when a man of noble family professed himself a monk,* he lost *caste*, and forfeited his rank. Nor would the uninitiated reader, perhaps, surmise this, in merely looking at Salvian's words: in fact, he would be very likely to interpret them in a very different sense. The *cavaliers*, if we may so call the gallants of our author's time, were, it seems, fain to *appear* even more abandoned than they might happen to be, in order to exempt themselves from a suspicion of being religiously disposed; which would have involved a civil degradation: —quod si quis ex nobilibus converti ad Deum cœperit, statim honorem nobilitatis amittit: (p. 117.)—in what state, asks our author, is a community within which 'religion is attended with ignominy?' But these phrases—'to be converted to God,' and 'to become religious,' are, in the constant usage of the patristic writers, purely technical, and are equivalent to 'turning monk.'

* Ubi enim quis mutaverit vestem (takes the monastic habit) mutat protinus dignitatem. P. 118.

No one accustomed to these writers will call this in question.* In roman catholic countries a *religious* house is nothing but a monastery, or a convent; and *un religieux*, is a monk or friar; and so at the period in question. Yet notwithstanding this civil disparagement, many persons of high birth professed the ascetic rule; and then, finding themselves degraded, they, as was natural, strove to regain consideration, sometimes by fanatical enormities, and sometimes in the path of intrigue, and by meddling with affairs of state.

'So does iniquity abound,' says Salvian, 'that either men are themselves bad; or, if good, they are cruelly persecuted by the many:—thus are verified the apostle's words, "the whole world lieth in the wicked one." No wonder that worse and worse is happening to us daily, who every day are becoming worse. Every day new crimes are perpetrated, and yet the old are not forsaken.'

I wish it were practicable to cite, as they occur, some passages of great force and beauty, with which our author brightens the sombre colouring of his argument. They are such, however, as must convince the reader of the author's personal piety, as well as intelligence. A passage of this sort, now before me (p. 129), has far more evangelic pathos than is often met with in the writers of the time. But we must adhere to our immediate purpose.

When profligacy and violence abound in a professedly christian community, they never fail to bring with them infidelity, and some form of contumacious impiety. Thus it was in Salvian's time; and he reports, with horror, the profanities that had then become common, even among those who still called themselves christians. I will charge myself with no other responsibility than that of merely transcribing the following passage. What weight it ought to have, in relation to our present argument, I shall hereafter more particularly show. Having beautifully expressed the christian's obligation to love and serve his Saviour, our author says—

* Salvian himself designates the monks, as the *religiosi*, and as distinguished from the seculars. P. 135.

'Cum ergo hæc à nobis deberi Domino satis certum est, videamus, quid pro his cunctis reddimus quæ debemus. Quid scilicet? Nisi totum illud quod supra diximus, quicquid indecens, quicquid indignum, quicquid ad injuriam Dei pertinens, actus improbos, mores flagitiosos, ebrias comessationes, cruentas manus, fœditates libidinis, rapidas cupiditates, et quicquid illud plus potest conscientia habere quàm sermo. Quæ enim, inquit apostolus, in occultò fiunt ab eis, turpe est etiam dicere. Nec solum hoc, nam hoc vetus est, et tam præsentium temporum, quam præteritorum: Illud gravius et lugubrius, quod peccatis veteribus nova addimus. Nec solum nova, sed quædam paganica ac prodigiosa, *et in Ecclesiis Dei* ante non visa: jactantes scilicet profanas in Deum voces et contumelias, blasphemantes, dicentes Deum incuriosum, Deum non intendentem, Deum negligentem, Deum non gubernantem, ac per hoc et immisericordem, et impræstabilem, inhumanum, asperum, durum.' Pp. 130, 131.

The frightful impiety which Salvian affirms to have broken forth *within the church*, is such as never springs up of itself, or from the bosom of a community in any moderate degree pure: it is the fruit—the natural and immemorial fruit ('the fool hath said in his heart,' &c.) of a prevalent licentiousness, attaching to *an instructed people*, when irritated by public calamities: then it is that the atheism which sensual excesses always breed in the bosom, bursts forth from the lips. Our author's allegation, then, in this instance, only subjoins what we should anticipate, as the natural consequence of that universal dissoluteness which he had already affirmed to be, and to have long been, the characteristic of the christian world. That such was, and had long been its characteristic, we have other evidence; but shall hold, at present, to our honest witness.

—'It might indeed,' says Salvian, 'have led us to suspect the truth of the doctrine of the righteous government of God, if men so abandoned as we are, were allowed to be happy. Yet far from confessing our crimes, we pretend innocence, and on this ground impeach the divine justice and goodness.* Maxima quippe

* I am here reporting the substance of several pages, of which however I shall furnish samples enough to satisfy the reader that I am not going beyond my authority.

accusatrix hominum noxiorum est usurpatrix innocentiæ arrogantia.' Some had objected that, at least, christians were better than the barbarians by whom they had lately been so cruelly oppressed. 'Yes,' he replies, 'but we are worse, unless much better, considering our privileges. But it is doubtful even if we be really better than they, in any other sense, saving the knowledge and profession of catholic doctrine.'

'But I know it will, to many, sound insufferable, if we should be heard to affirm that we are inferior to the barbarians .... But what if it be so? Let us look to the allegation.—The barbarians are either heretics (arians) or pagans. At once I admit that, as to the divine law (the knowledge of it) we are far better than either; but as to what belongs to the life and conduct—I grieve, I lament to say, we are worse. And yet, as before observed, I must not be understood as affirming this absolutely of the entire mass of the roman world: for I except, first, all *the religious;* and then *some* even of the seculars, not inferior to them; or if that be saying too much, at least comparable to the monks in virtuous behaviour. As to the rest, all, or nearly all, I affirm to be more guilty than the barbarians.... Reader, art thou enraged in seeing this affirmed?—Condemn me if I lie: condemn me if I shall not make good what I assert.'

This passage demands however our particular attention; and I have to appeal to the reader's discrimating impartiality, as to the use that should be made of it.

Excipio enim primùm OMNES RELIGIOSOS. I except ALL the monks! and in another place, after declaring that the entire mass of society was a sink, 'quasi ex omni platearum et cloacarum labe collectum,' our author subjoins—'præter id quod in Domini templo erat.' Taken as they stand, without particular scrutiny, these exceptions afford evidence of the writer's care and candour, and they show, moreover, that he was not impelled, as some reprovers have been, by an acrimonious feeling toward his own order.

Or again; if the exception were allowed, then it would serve to attest the allegation that the monastic system, when once established in the bosom of a community, has the effect, even supposing itself to be pure, of withdrawing, more and more, all corrective influences from the mass of society, and so of surround-

ing itself with an ocean of profligacy. If Salvian's exception be not itself liable to exception, then the facts of the case are plainly these—The monastic institute, which was the darling of the nicene divines, giving it time enough to work its proper effect, had just served to entomb *all*, absolutely *all* the virtue and piety of the church, while it left the mass of the community—still called christian, in a condition so utterly debauched as to forbid a description of its enormities. This was what the system had come to within the short space of thirty or forty years! Even taking Salvian's account in the best sense it will bear, and unexamined.—

But what if we come to analyse the exception itself, and to bring it to the test of other evidence? 'Excipio,' says our author, '*omnes* religiosos:' and again, "præter id quod in Dòmini templo erat.' If he had said, I except *most* of the monks, his testimony, in their favour, would have done them more service. Inasmuch however as other evidence, and we need look no further than to the admissions of Jerome and Chrysostom, put it beyond question that very many of the regulars, in all parts of christendom, were the very pests of society—in fact precisely such as *monks* have ordinarily been; an explanation of the discrepancy is called for. Salvian could not have been ignorant of what was going on in the monasteries:—he is an honest man, unquestionably, and yet he says, 'excipio *omnes religiosos!*' It would therefore seem as if, in making this comprehensive exception, he had been influenced by some latent consideration of prudence or delicacy, which he thought to be of weight enough to justify a concealment of the truth, in this particular.

On the ground of this supposition, it will be our part to look up and down, in search of some (it may be) slender indication of this motive.—We find, in fact, an explicit avowal of it. All difficulty therefore vanishes, and we know how to translate the 'Excipio omnes religiosos.' I shall produce the original of the entire context, where this avowal occurs; and shall request the reader to examine it narrowly; and I shall report the substance of it, a little further on. 'Quanquam quid dicam in Dei templo? hoc quippe totum ad sacerdotes tantùm et clerum pertinet, *quos non disculio, quia Domini mei ministerio reverentiam servo*, et quos

&c. Our author avows then the reason, the validity of which we will not dispute, which restrained him from looking into holy places.—The clergy, whatever might be their conduct, he would not arraign;—he would institute no inquiry whatever on sacred ground. Be it so; and it is thus that St. Bernard, after intimating plainly enough what he thought of the conduct of the clergy in his time, draws a veil over the scandal; and yet, within a few pages, unable any longer to repress his indignation, he plainly utters what he had said he would conceal!

But this avowal, it will be said, relates to the clergy only—the seculars; not to the *religiosi*—the monks. In Salvian's view, himself an ascetic, the motive for concealment, in regard to the monastic order, would be even stronger than that which induced him to respect the official reputation of the clergy. Contemplating, as he did, a deluge of impurities, threatening to sweep every thing sacred from the face of the earth, his only hope of seeing christianity preserved from extinction, must have been anchored upon the religious establishments. If *these* might still be maintained (and the maintenance of them depended mainly upon the good opinion of the people) then piety might at least find an asylum. To have said any thing, therefore, tending to destroy the popular reverence toward the monastery, would have been to dash this only hope. If once the people had heard a man so well informed, and of such repute, declare that the religious houses were, too many of them, what otherwise we know them to have been, they would have thrown off all fear; and perhaps have openly relapsed into paganism. There can be no difficulty then in understanding our author's — Excipio omnes religiosos: by *except* he really means *screen*. We shall however presently meet with a passage which removes all doubt on this point.

It is very true that, in an age of universal profligacy, such as Salvian asserts the closing years of the nicene era to have been, the truly pious would, if possible, hide themselves in the wilderness, or retire to the monasteries. It was *there* that the 'seven thousand' was to be found, if anywhere; and therefore it might truly be affirmed, of the monastic establishments, that they were the retreats of prayer and virtue: This was quite consistent with

the unquestionable fact of the profligacy of the greater number of the monks.*

But we return to our author. 'Let us talk no more of our religious privileges (p. 137) if it appears that the light we have, serves only to condemn us. . . . . Let us compare our course of life, our pursuits, manners, vices, with those of the barbarians. Are the barbarians unjust? so are we. Are they avaricious? so are we. Are they faithless? so are we. Are they covetous? so are we. Are they devoid of modesty? so are we. In a word, are the barbarians full of all manner of wickedness and impurity? so are we. But it may be said, if we are thus on a level with them in sin, why are we worse off?—'cur non sumus viribus pares?—Why left to be their inferiors in power and worldly prosperity?' Salvian easily finds an answer: 'it is because, in doing the same things, our *guilt* is much heavier, for we sin against a plenitude of instruction, and under the effulgence of christian advantages.' The particular comparisons he enters into are highly curious historically; but we must omit them. They afford evidence of the perpetuity of national characteristics, notwithstanding the sweeping revolutions that have so often passed over the European surface: they serve, moreover, to mark the limits of christendom, in the author's time. In fact a harvest of historical notices is yet to be gleaned from the pages of less noted writers, such as Salvian.

* It does not appear whether it may be necessary, and *unless necessary*, assuredly I shall excuse myself from the task, to cite at length the evidence which removes all doubt on this point. The testimony of Nilus, himself an admirable man, and the disciple and personal friend of Chrysostom, would, I believe, be more than enough to satisfy those whose eyes are not bandaged. The epistles of Nilus, edifying, although darkened by the nicene cloud, I have before me, and also his invaluable personal narrative (invaluable as a document of history). His *Ascetica*, containing (this I assume at second hand) the more explicit part of his inculpation of the monks of his time, I have failed, as yet, to obtain. Nilus, describing the 'life in the wilderness,' among the solitudes of Sinai, in a manner which might tempt one to follow him, attests the general corruption of the times, as affirmed by Salvian; and this testimony relates to a rather earlier period. There was no *mean*, no general morality, no diffused virtue—nothing but extremes—either a grim asceticism, driven into the wilderness; or utter dissoluteness, everywhere else. A long, and particular description of the luxury of the age, commences—'Τοσοῦτον γὰρ ἴσχυσεν ΝΥΝ ἡ ἄπληστος λαιμαργία.'. . . .—Narrationes, p. 31.

The profane custom of swearing 'by Christ,' long before in vogue among the monks, as we learn from Palladius, had become almost universal at this time; this asseveration was on the lips, of all, 'præter paucos,' and perpetually. Even the most trivial or the most unworthy occasions were wont to be graced with this impiety—'per Christum;' in truth, there were those who, not on *trivial* occasions merely, but on the most guilty, thus invoked the divine Saviour.—'Denique multi, non otiosas tantummodo res et aniles, sed etiam scelera quædam se jurant per Christi nomen esse facturos.' 'Such persons,' says our author, 'were used to say 'Per Christum quia tollo illud;' 'Per Christum quia cædo illum:' 'Per Christum quia occido illum!' Such men seem to think that when they have sworn by Christ, their crimes are in some way sanctioned by religion.' Of this Salvian cites an instance that had occurred to himself; and having related it, he asks, if such a height of impiety could have been imagined, as that men should come to perpetrate the most frightful acts of rapacity and violence, against the poor and feeble, declaring that they could in conscience do no less, *having already pledged their faith to Christ*, that they would do as much! Can pagans do worse than this? 'Quanto minori peccato illi per dæmonia pejerant, quàm nos per Christum? Our Saviour has said, "so let your light shine" &c. but we, on the contrary, so live that the sons of men see our wicked doings, and blaspheme the name of our Father who is in heaven.' p. 147.

'The rude nations around us,' says our author, 'cannot be reproached with any such impious inconsistency as attaches to us; neither the Huns, the Saxons, the Moors, the Scythians; but as for us Christians, we are open to the taunts of mankind who say, Ecce quales sunt qui Christum colunt: falsum planè illud est quod aiunt, se bona discere, quod jactant, se sanctæ legis præcepta retinere. Si enim bona discerent, boni essent.' 'See what these Christians do,' say the heathen, 'and then you may easily know what it is that Christ teaches.'

Salvian's statement of the comparative demerit of the orthodox and the heterodox evinces a calm and equitable temper, and is altogether unlike the intolerance of the times. 'In what manner heretics are to be punished, in the day of judgment, for their

error, none can know but the Judge; meantime, as I think, God exercises patience toward them, inasmuch as he sees them, although not rightly to believe, yet to err under the influence of a religious feeling,'—namely, a regard to the principles handed down to them, by their predecessors.

Thucydides notes it as an indication of the barbarism of ancient Greece, that even her proudest heroes thought it no discredit to live by plunder; nay, made a boast of their exploits in this line. Salvian's language, speaking of the magnates of his times—professedly christian, is nearly of the same import. 'They attached no disgrace,' says the classic historian, 'to the life of a brigand, but rather gloried in it.' 'Nam et latrones,' says our honest and indignant christian reprover, 'fermè omnes gaudent et gloriantur, si atrociores admodum, quam sunt, esse dicantur; and such are our great men, preying upon the poor and helpless without shame.—To such a pass have things come that the only safety is found in being yourself as bad as others. But are there none to interpose, none who may step forward to rescue the poor and needy:—non est penè usque ad unum,' replies our author, 'quia tanta est raritas bonorum, ut penè unus esse videatur,' p. 168. 'Is it likely,' he asks, 'that any one should undertake the cause of the oppressed, when even the priests of the Lord do nothing;—the most of them either holding their peace; or if they speak, acting like the silent. So it is that the poor are plundered, widows groan, orphans are trampled upon, and many are driven to take refuge among the barbarians; quærentes scilicet apud barbaros, romanam humanitatem, quia apud romanos barbaram inhumanitatem ferre non possunt.'

Salvian roundly affirms that multitudes had renounced the roman name and citizenship, abandoning their homes, to find a comparative rest among the fierce hordes that then beset the empire. 'Malunt enim sub specie captivitatis vivere liberi, quàm sub specie libertatis esse captivi.' 'The name of roman citizen, once thought so much of, and purchased at so high a price is now renounced and held not worthless merely, sed etiam abominabile penè habetur.'

The details which fill the fifth book of this treatise belon rather to the civil, than to the ecclesiastical historian, and they are

such as make it evident that the incursions of the barbarians, and at length the spread of the Saracens over the east, north Africa, and Spain, should be regarded as having been severe remedies, rather than calamities. The lower orders, in all parts of the empire, were sighing for the barbarian rule; and as to those who had emigrated, 'unum illic Romanorum omnium votum est, *ne unquam eos necesse sit in jus transire Romanorum.* Is it any wonder that we should be conquered by the barbarians; or who can wonder that God should deliver us into their hands? Cogimus ad ulciscendas criminum nostrorum immanitates nolentem Deum.

At length Salvian's discretion, as to sacred persons, forsakes him, at least for a moment, and he avows the truth: the following passage is an echo only of the testimony of all ages, as to the ordinary quality of monkery; and the uniformity of this testimony is such as to obliterate the traces of time; so as that, in any particular instance, we can hardly tell whether we are listening to Erasmus, to Wickliffe, to Claude of Turin, to Nilus, to Salvian, to Jerome, to Chrysostom, or—to Cyprian. The aids of philological criticism apart, if twenty passages, faithfully descriptive of monkery, and drawn from writers of all ages, were thrown together, no one could undertake the task of arranging them in their chronological order. The comfortless piety of the 'paucissimi' excepted, the professors of ascetic sanctity have been the wearers of a mask in all countries, and in every age. What says Salvian, what says he, by a sort of blunder, after having excepted OMNES RELIGIOSOS?

'But it is only the laity, I warrant you, who sin at this rate!—not surely some of the clergy; worldly men, not surely many of the monks—religiosi? Aye indeed: under a colour of religion, sold to worldly vices, these men, who after a course of shameless profligacy and crime, inscribing themselves with a title of sanctity, differ from what they once were in profession only, not in conduct:—they have changed their name, not their life; and thinking the garb of piety to contain its substance—they have put off the garment only, not the mind of their former state. So it is that others, with the less odium profess themselves guilty, who when they declare themselves to have done penance, relinquish neither their former manners, nor their attire. For in

such sort, on almost all occasions, do they (the monks) behave, that you would suppose them, not so much to have repented of their former crimes, as since to have repented of their repentance; nor so much formerly to have repented that they had lived immorally, as afterwards, that they had promised to live better. These men well know that what I am saying is true:—their own consciences bear testimony to every word. Along with many others, these monks are foremost in hunting for fresh distinctions, and after taking up the name of penitence, become the buyers of the most ample and unwonted powers; and so, not like the laity merely, but more than the laity, would they fain make themselves: what they had been (as men of the world) was not enough: (as monks) they must be something more.

'How should not such men repent of their (professed) repentance? Can one believe it that men should have been thinking any thing of conversion, and of God, who, abstaining from intercourse with their own wives, have made no scruple of trenching upon the rights of others; and who, while they make profession of bodily continence, act like bacchanals in the debaucheries of the mind? Truly this is a new sort of conversion, which consists in abstaining from whatever is lawful, and in perpetrating whatever is unlawful. Oh yes, they deny themselves the marriage bed; but they deny themselves not ravishing (the antithesis demands this sense to be assigned to the word rapina). What is this?—foolish doctrine! God hath forbidden sins, not matrimony!' pp. 185-7.

Much to the same purpose follows of which this may serve as a sample; and it is a sample of all that has been said and written by *honest men*, on the same subject, in all ages; and if there are any who, with all this evidence before them, are trying to make the world believe something very different, they ought to think themselves much indebted to whoever will yet allow *them* to be honest men.

Not in a few places, or hastily, but in many, and with the utmost solemnity, our author declares that a shameless wickedness had spread itself over the entire mass of the (christian) community. 'Omnes enim admodum in perditione ruunt, aut certè ut aliquid dicam levius, penè omnes:'—at the very best, almost all, within the limits of the church (and, as we shall see, our author

mentions each quarter of western christendom) almost all had addicted themselves to flagitious vices.

'Alas, alas! our misery, how unlike is the church to what once it was' (that is to say, in the apostolic times) so exclaims Salvian, in the middle of the *fifth* century. Basil, in the middle of the fourth, again and again makes the same lamentation, and almost in the same terms. 'I have been very ill,' says the good bishop, to his friend Gregory (epist. vii.) 'confined to my bed, and expecting death every hour; and the churches very much resemble my crazy body, without any good hope in prospect, and always falling off toward a worse condition:' and again, to Athanasius (epist. xlviii.) such phrases as these occur—'the present *state*, of the churches; *confusion*, I ought rather to say'—'how things have altered:—the now miserable degeneracy, παραπτωσις of the churches.' Still more strongly in his epistle to the bishops and brethren of the western churches, he deplores the falling off from pristine purity; and the like, in that to the bishops and pastors of those of Italy. Or if we ascend still higher, we may hear Hegesippus reporting the sentiment of his times, That the church had maintained its virgin purity about a hundred years, and had then suffered corruption.*

But we return to our author. 'How should we exult,' says he, 'and skip for joy, if indeed we could believe that the good and the bad were nearly balanced in the church, as to numbers. —See to what condition we are fallen, how declined from that once pure state of the christian people, in which all were blameless; whereas we should judge ourselves happy if the good were as many as the bad: yea, how could we but be happy, in so thinking, when in fact we have to mourn over almost the whole mass as guilty—penè totam nunc esse plangimus criminosam . . . . . If all are not equally bad, they would fain be so if they could, and even show an ambition not to be outdone in wickedness. . . . . With our christians, wickedness is wisdom, and—"the worse the wiser," seems to be their rule. . . . . Are we not therefore worse than the barbarians—they excused by their ignorance, we condemned by our knowledge?' pp. 194-6.

Our author then proceeds to inveigh indignantly against the

* Quoted by Eusebius, lib. iv. cap. 22.

horrors of the theatre, and the sanguinary excitements of the games, to which, he says, the so-called christians of his times rushed with unrestrained eagerness. 'Nay but,' says an objector, 'we are not at the theatre every day.'—'But you would be there if you could; nor does the murderer stain his hands in blood every day.' And as to the scenes there exposed to thousands of christian eyes, 'Talia enim sunt quæ illic fiunt, ut ea non solùm dicere, sed etiam recordari aliquis sine pollutione non possit. .... Quis enim integro verecundiæ statu dicere queat .... Can we wonder that the Lord should have abandoned those who have given themselves up to these abominations? Ecce *innumera Christianorum millia* in spectaculis quotidie rerum turpium commemorantur. Can God have respect to those who are such? Does not the divine eye behold what is done in the circus and theatre? The heathen celebrated these games, fully believing them to be acceptable to their gods. We celebrate the same, well knowing them to be abominable to our God!—But this is not the worst—Christo ergo (ô amentia monstruosa) Christo circenses offerimus et mimos.' .... pp. 199—203.

Nothing would be more futile than to call in question the general correctness of Salvian's representations; but a special instance like this affords a test to which the truth of the whole may be brought. We hear him roundly charging his christian contemporaries, not merely with frequenting the blood-stained and filthy theatre, but with celebrating these games in honour of Christ!—A presbyter of a principal church—a writer highly honoured by the few who felt with him, and whose writings have been handed down, as authentic and edifying, challenges contradiction in affirming these incredible inconsistencies.—His allegations could not be contradicted. But being admitted, they prove, incontestably, not merely the shameless degeneracy of the times, but such a condition of the social system as is never brought about within a few years. From such a state of things we must go back very far before we can expect to reach a pure, and holy, and spiritually-minded church. If the church in the time of the great divines—a few years earlier, had been what we are now required to believe that it was, could it have become such as Salvian reports it to have been in his day?

Through several pages our author goes on to convict those of frightful impiety who, while taking upon themselves the obligations of a christian profession, and participating in the sacraments, nevertheless gave themselves up daily to the service of the devil. 'Where are those to be found who do that, on account of which, as the apostle says, Christ came into the world? . . . . Yes indeed! We follow Christ's footsteps—in the circus! We follow the Saviour—in the theatre! We have engaged to renounce the devil, and *his* pomps and vanities, and we addict ourselves to *his* spectacles. In these spectacles what a denial of the faith! How deadly a prevarication of the profession we make in the celestial sacraments!—What like this is to be found among the barbarians? even if they did the same, their sin were not the same in doing it . . . . We actually give more honour to the games, than we do to the churches of God;—and this is a proof that we do so.—If ever it happens, and this indeed often happens, that, on the same day, a church festival is celebrated, and also the public games, I put it to the consciences of all, where will the greater crowd of christian men be found? Where?—within the ring, or in the temple of God?—whither is the rush—to the theatre, or to the church? . . . . On the days when the games are celebrated, if there happen a festival of the church, not only do those who still call themselves christians, not come to church; but if, by accident, any who have been ignorant that the games are going on, hear of it, even in church, they leave the church! We despise the temple of God, that we may run to the theatre! *

'But you say, these things are not done in *every* town: no indeed, they are not; but only because such places have fallen into the hands of the barbarians, or have been ransacked and rased, (and the instances are named p. 211) or because the people of certain provinces are reduced to the lowest condition of misery: nunc autem ludicra ipsa ideo non aguntur, quia agi jam præ miseria temporis atque egestate non possunt. If some things are not now done that were wont to be done, we have to thank our poverty, not our discipline for the change. Only restore us to our former prosperity, and we shall pursue the very same courses.'

'During the flourishing condition of the roman empire,' says

* A parallel passage from Chrysostom will be found in the Supplement.

Salvian (p. 216), 'when the state knew not where to stow, or how to spend its inexhaustible revenues, it was no wonder if it spent a good part in these vain diversions. But now, reduced as we are, we yet addict ourselves to the same. Miseri jam sumus, et necdum nugaces esse cessamus:—beggarly triflers still.' This subject leads our author to mention what is a material circumstance in the evidence I am now adducing, and to which, as indicative of the *preceding* condition of the church, the reader's attention should be particularly directed. The roman world had lately, and almost everywhere, suffered the severest calamities; provinces had been ravaged, cities overthrown, and all the miseries of war and anarchy endured. Had then these afflictions wrought no reform? 'No,' says Salvian—'the very contrary has everywhere happened.'

'But surely we who were corrupted by prosperity, have been reformed by adversity? and those who, during a long peace, had learned intemperance, have become sober in trouble?'

Let the reader observe that the prevailing profligacy of christians is here assumed to have been the characteristic of that long period of public tranquillity which the church had enjoyed. Salvian's evidence is thus carried up into the midst of the nicene era. But there is even more in this statement than appears.—It may without limitation be affirmed, that, even if there be at any time a declension of piety in the church, yet if the substance of it remain, and if more than a few, in all quarters, are alive—although not so much alive as they should be, to the momentous realities of the christian faith, a time of public calamity, of fear and suffering, refreshes the zeal, and reanimates the faith of the sincere. These, arousing themselves to a new assiduity in the exercises of devotion, and in the labours of charity, awaken others also; and a season of spiritual renovation ensues. What is true of the individual christian, is true of the church, and precisely for the same reasons. Affliction 'brings forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness.' If it be not so in any case, the darkest suspicions, as to the previous character, whether of the individual, or of the community, are warranted. Those who, in a time of calamity, plunge into deeper sensualities, whatever they may have called themselves, are no christians. May not as much as this be *universally*

affirmed? Has not this been always the admitted criterion of religious character?—Whoever is hardened and rendered openly profligate by affliction, is no better than a heartless professor: the christian is he who, in trouble, 'thinks upon his ways, and turns his feet into the path of God's testimonies.' Apply this test then to the NICENE CHURCH—apply it to the mass of christian people in various quarters, that had been trained under the great divines from whose writings 'church principles' are now to be drawn for our benefit.

Let Salvian say what had been the *general effect* of tribulation upon the very churches over which the nicene bishops had presided, and in which many of them had, according to the dark notions of that age, faithfully laboured.—These assiduous and sincere men had consecrated all their eminent talents to the work of enhancing, in the people's view, the mysterious and infallible efficacy of the sacraments;—they had solemnly assumed, for the church, the highest authority, and for the clergy, as her representatives and organs, all the reverence that could be claimed, or rendered, short of adoration: they had cherished all those 'wholesome' impressions, which impel men to bow before whatever has become associated with religion —the memories and the relics of the saints—churches and sacred spots; and, to crown all, these zealous men had commended the ascetic philosophy, as the summit of christian perfection. They had enjoyed signal advantages for promulgating, and for firmly establishing, these principles, and for giving the sanction of time to these practices.—What is the result? Even making a large allowance for a degree of sluggishness, or worldliness of temper, affecting christians generally, as the consequence of external ease, and an abundance of earthly good, was there found, within the church, such a *substratum* of genuine piety as needed only a season of affliction to quicken it into life and power?

Salvian shall reply. 'Is it so,' he asks, 'that the communities which had become immoral during prosperity, have begun to return to purity of conduct under affliction? Is it so that the drunkenness* which had grown during a time of tranquillity and abundance,

* Basil, a century before, roundly charges the 'christian' people of his times with the grossest intemperance, and profligate luxury. See the Homily 'Against Drunkenness and Excess.'

has declined, at least, amid the ravages of war? Italy has been drenched with blood; but have the vices of Italy been forsaken? Rome herself has been besieged, and taken (an. 410); but have the roman people ceased to be blasphemous and outrageous (furiosi)? Barbarian hordes have inundated the provinces of Gaul, but, as to their abandoned manners, are not the people of Gaul as guilty as ever? The Vandals have passed over into Spain (an. 412) and the condition of Spain is indeed changed; but not her pravity of morals. And lastly, lest any part of the world should be free from these terrible evils, war has traversed the seas.—Sardinia and Sicily, our store-houses, have fallen, and Africa too—the soul of the state:—but have these countries been reformed? . . . Far from it. What was it that happened at Carthage? (an. 430.) Even while the noise of war was ringing around the walls, the church of Carthage maddened in the circus, and luxuriated in the theatre! At the same moment some were being slaughtered without, and some practising lewdness within;—a part of the people in bondage with the enemy, a part in the bondage of their vices! . . . . the clash of arms without the walls, and within a confused din of conflicts and of shows.'

Salvian goes on, and with eloquent indignation, to describe the horrors and the infatuation that had attended the devastation of Gaul, and of which he had been an eye-witness:—'Vidi ego illic res lacrymabiles.' . . . . 'Quod ipse vidi, et sustinui. . . . . Nam dum bibunt, ludunt, mœchantur, insaniunt, Christum negare cœperunt.' P. 229. No description of similar scenes, anywhere found on the page of history, presents darker colours than the one which our author furnishes. It is the picture of a people long brutalized by the grossest sensualities; and yet fanatical, and at length overtaken by public calamities without having in reserve virtue enough to impart dignity to misfortune. So lost to all public feeling were the people of all classes, that they neither apprehended their danger, nor took any means to avert it. 'Totum incuria et segnities, totum negligentia et gula, totum ebrietas et somnolentia possidebant.'

But how does this evidence affect our argument?—I have now before me the massy volumes of the 'Gesta Dei per Francos,' from which many descriptions as revolting as those of Salvian

might be gathered. An historian, when satisfied of the authenticity of those narratives, would assume it as sufficient proof of an extreme corruption of the social system at that time — such a corruption as can never affect a people suddenly;—it is the product of causes that have been long in operation. A season of public confusion does but bring out to the eye a state of the moral mass which tranquillity had concealed. So Salvian's evidence must be regarded as strictly pertinent to our present inquiry, as to the FACT of the alleged pre-eminent sanctity of the christian community in the nicene age.

Before we pass on, it may be proper to notice the fact that the mad propensity to indulge in the lascivious pleasures of the theatre, and the horrid excitements of the circus, was no novelty among those calling themselves christians. The traces of this inconsistency are frequent, and a protest against it may be found in most of the Fathers, from Chrysostom, up to Clement of Alexandria. It is manifest that the church-going folks addressed by the former, were, to a very great extent, addicted to these forbidden pleasures —perhaps not less so than those of Salvian's time. Let the reader turn, as an instance, to Chrysostom's first homily on Matthew. 'There,' that is, in what he calls, the 'satanic theatres,' 'there, οἱ πολλοὶ, the many, pass whole days, who grudge to tarry but a little while in the church, where God himself is speaking.' And let the candid reader say whether a pleasure-loving, luxurious people, taught as they were, to trust to the efficacy of sacraments, was not likely to become such as Salvian reports his contemporaries to have been—at once fanatical, atheistic, and in the last degree debauched? These things are connected by a close connexion of cause and effect.

'Religionem novimus; ignorantiâ non excusamur,' says Salvian; but it was a religion the very same, as to its moral tendency, as that which, in modern times, has made the people of Spain, and of Spanish America, what they are. In his times, as in our own, absolution, granted as a matter of course to those who, while confessing, were meditating new crimes, produced—what else can it produce? a profligacy that knows no bounds. Does the following remonstrance belong to the *fifth* century, or to the *nineteenth*, and to Spain and Ireland? Whencesoever it proceeds, to what

age soever it belongs, it is the proper comment upon the doctrine and practice of absolution, according to 'church principles.' 'Sic fatentur ut in ipsa confessione non doleant. Idem enim nunc est animus in fatentibus, qui in agentibus fuit. Sicut tunc non puduit flagitia committere, sic nunc omninò non pœnitet, flagitiosa fecisse.'

Were I to quote the pages now before me, even softening as far as possible every offensive phrase, these numbers would be condemned as 'crammed with obscenities; and not fit to be looked at by decent folks.' Be it so; but whence come these unpleasing materials? They come, let my critics hear it, and if they will not take it on my word, I will resort to other means for proving it, they come from the SINK whence 'church principles' have also been drawn up! But the revivers of church principles say, 'Can we not take the *principles*, and leave the *filth?*' You may do so when you have disproved the allegation, which all history establishes, that the impurity is the direct, the invariable, and the inevitable product of such doctrine.

Let my opponents listen to my honest witness, who challenges contradiction in asking, 'Quis non se barathro sordidissimæ colluvionis immersit? Quis conjugii fidem reddidit? immò quantum ad passivitatem libidinis pertinet, quis non conjugem in numerum ancillarum redegit?' p. 245.

We come here to a point that might soon be settled among honest men, and concerning which, as I am apt to think, *honest men* will soon be of one opinion—leaving any other opinion to a class of persons not I hope very numerous in this land of manly ingenuousness.—The first characteristic of the christian morality is its tendency to purify and bless the domestic economy (God's noblest work on earth) and it has been found to do this always, and wherever *christian principles* have been taught, faithfully, and in simplicity. Woman is at once lifted from her degradation: man must rise with her: home is blessed; nay, home is *created*, for there is none where woman is not pure and honoured; children fondly reverence their mother, and receive the rudiments of heavenly truth from her loving, and loved lips: they are trained 'in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.' Are these things only golden dreams?—Whether men of the cloister, or ascetic

critics may know it or not, they are happy realities;—they are bright facts, by no means rare, and these blessings come directly from the gospel:—all this mystery of home-enjoyment, so far as any have learned it, they have learned directly from the lips of Christ and his apostles: it is they who have taught us how, in the wilderness of this evil world, to make the rose and the lily endure the roughness of the climate; it is they who have blessed 'bed and board;'—it is they who have restored paradise for our use: all the sweetness of life, because all its purity and virtue, we owe to Christ and his apostles, who have taught the true philosophy of love.

But how has this been done?—Has it been by telling woman that she can be pure, or like an angel, only while a virgin; and by telling man that the touch of a female hand is poison to the soul? or has it been done by the means of the parallel doctrine, broached among the herd, that 'confession, priestly absolution, and the sacraments,' will carry them clear of all danger? No! People who are thus taught, will act accordingly, and, saving the 'paucissimi quidam'—all will rush together into the lowest depths of impurity; all together will become abominable, miserable; all together will be lost to virtue, to piety, to hope! Too soon shall we fatally know how close and certain is the connexion between the ascetic sacramental doctrine, and universal profligacy, should the english church continue to lend an ear to the sepulchral whispers of the restorers of antiquity.—Antiquity! WHAT WAS ANTIQUITY AT HOME? Let us hear what it was from one who knew.

'Hîc jam quæro à sapientibus, cum hæc ita essent, quales putent fuisse illîc FAMILIAS, ubi tales erant patresfamilias? Quanta servorum illic corruptela, ubi dominorum tanta corruptio? Morbido enim capite, nil sanum est; neque ullum omninò membrum officio suo fungitur, ubi quod est principale non constat.' p. 247. Such our author roundly affirms to have been the *domestic condition* of the roman christianized world in his times! No single indication does he furnish of the existence, around him, or any where within his knowledge, of domestic christian purity, spirituality, and peace.—Nothing like that which—thank God! adorns and blesses thousa. ds, and tens of thousands of British Protestant homes.

The pitiable condition of the female members of the family, such as it then was, almost universally, our author feelingly describes. 'Ex quo intelligi potest, quantum cœnum impudicarum sordium fuerit, ubi sub impurissimis dominis castas esse, etiamsi voluissent, fœminas non licebat.' p. 251. As to those who had been carried captive by the barbarians, their miseries had not reclaimed them; and so flagitious was their conduct that, even these rude people were scandalized in beholding it: 'inter pudicos barbaros impudici sumus. Plus adhuc dico, offenduntur barbari ipsi impuritatibus nostris. There are but few of the Goths who practise those impurities which we, almost without an exception, practise? what they condemn and execrate, we do and glory in!'

How forcible and impressive are Salvian's words, in this instance! having just before described, in glowing language, the natural beauty and fertility of Aquitaine, he says—'the land which we had polluted by our fornications, the barbarians now cleanse by their chastity.' P. 254. Too readily have we assented to the customary mode of speaking of the incursions of the barbarians, as devastations, which in fact were but a sweeping away of insufferable abominations. Salvian is honest enough to acknowledge this.

'But it may be thought,' he continues, 'that what I am saying is true of Aquitaine alone. Let us pass over then to other parts of the world, lest we should seem to have had the people of Gaul exclusively in view.' He then affirms the same of Spain, or even worse; and nothing can be more pertinent or vigorous than his adaptations of scripture instances, in illustration of the divine judicial treatment of the several nations he mentions. 'Why was it that the fairest portions of the roman world had been given as a prey into the hands of the least warlike of the barbarian tribes? —it was to show that these calamities were God's own work; and to convince us that we have fallen, not by the arms of the enemy, but by our own vices.' Yet it seems this lesson was not learned: nothing but impieties were heard; neither supplications in distress, nor thanksgivings in deliverance; and here again our author boldly affirms the superiority of the barbarians: his language is most remarkable; and, considered as *mere evidence*, touching facts which we have been used to regard in a very different

light, ought not to be passed over:—how little space has been afforded to *such* evidence, in our 'Church Histories!'

'We (orthodox christians) have shown neither piety in tribulation, nor gratitude in prosperity.—At non ita Gothi, non ita Wandali, malis licet doctoribus instituti, *meliores tamen in hac parte quàm nostri.*' Salvian well knew how intensely this would irritate the churchmen around him; nevertheless truth shall be spoken at whatever risk 'offendi quosdam quamvis suspicer, his quæ diximus: sed quia VERITAS magis quàm offensio cogitanda est, dicam, et sæpe dicam; non ita Gothi, non ita Wandali.' . . . P. 260. The instances are striking, and if our immediate argument permitted, they would well deserve our particular consideration: there is a deep meaning in the facts to which Salvian refers. 'As to prayer before battle, and thanksgiving for victory, which the heretical barbarians practised, we orthodox should only turn it to ridicule, as we do every thing else belonging to piety.' . . . 'And God, the righteous Judge, hath dealt with the two parties accordingly—giving to the one victory and abundance, to the other defeat and misery. . . . . how vain then our boast of the purity of a catholic faith!'

Our author passes around the roman world, everywhere finding the same characters of impiety and shameless vice. As to North Africa, over which Augustine had so lately diffused his influence, and among the churches of which his voice had only just ceased to be heard, what says he? 'Et postea quid fuit *totum Africæ territorium*, quàm domus una vitiorum, aheno illi similis de quo prepheta dicit.' . . . This heavy charge he substantiates by instances which I must not adduce:—no acrimony sharpens his language; it is the indignant lamentation of a good man, and a faithful minister of Christ; nevertheless no descriptions anywhere to be found, of the last stage of social corruption, can exceed what is expressed, or is plainly implied in these pages. 'Nam sicut in sentinam profundæ navis colluviones omnium sordium; sic in mores eorum, quasi ex omni mundo, vitia fluxerunt!' Are we then to believe that, within the compass of a few years, the african church had passed from a condition of eminent spirituality and purity, to a condition which could be likened to nothing so fitly as to the cesspool in the hold of a large ship?

It is remarkable that, as the mahometan conquerors, when they penetrated into christendom, became impressed with the conviction that they had been sent by God to punish the enormities and the idolatries which they beheld; so, as Salvian affirms, did the barbarians, in the fifth century: 'Ipsi denique fatebantur, non suum esse quod facerent, agi enim se divino jussu ac perurgeri.'

The pages now before me, and of which I shall present a sample, cannot be read without amazement. Who that had spent his years in the perusal of Augustine's fourteen folios, replete, as they are, with elevated and impassioned devotional sentiment, with eloquent expositions of all the great articles of christian morality, and with doctrinal instructions, much more nearly evangelic than those of any of his contemporaries or predecessors, who would have believed that all this christian influence, shed, as it was, over an extensive surface, and under circumstances favourable to its operation, should have received the comment which Salvian furnishes? Let the christian philosopher say whether there must not have been some fatal error, attaching to A SYSTEM, which even when worked with all imaginable intensity of purpose, by a man like Augustine, could have had such an issue? The purport of all we are affirming, in this present controversy, is this—not that Cyprian and Augustine were not personally good and zealous men;—those who misrepresent us as affirming any such thing, well know that we have carefully respected the reputation of eminent individuals; but we say, that the church system of the nicene age was such as *must* bring about, and invariably has brought about, after a little interval, universal profligacy.—How does Salvian's report of the african church bear upon our allegation? After saying that, 'if nations are disgraced by some vices, they are usually exempt from others,' he adds—'In Afris penè omnibus nescio quid non malum. If any are fierce, they are fierce; if any drunken, they are sottish: if any false, they the most false: if any fraudulent, they the most fraudulent; if any rapacious, they the most so: if any perfidious, they the most treacherous; and in all they bear the palm: but as to impurity!'....

And what says he of CARTHAGE? He names its various prerogatives, rivalling those of Rome;—its excellent municipal apparatus, its well-ordered magistracy, and its wealth, learning,

refinement; but what as to the manners of the people?—all that Scripture has said of Babylon, Tyre, Sodom; all, and worse, if there can be worse: 'ibi inter tot millia si diligentissime quæreres, castum, vel in Ecclesia reperire vix posses. Plus multò dicam, utinam hæc essent sola quæ diximus.' . . . . P. 279. Here we must stop—

—Stop in adducing the evidence, which modern ears must not listen to: shall I be challenged to bring it forward?—But now I must *again* ask the reader to take his 'Cyprian from his shelf.'* —We place ourselves then at Carthage; and go back about one hundred and eighty, or at the most two hundred years, where we find 'the good Cyprian,' eminent, but miserably-mistaken man—the victim of his times, and a martyr, first slain by the gnostic error, and then by the roman sword;—Cyprian, not indeed blaspheming God's constitution of human nature, in the domestic economy; but fatally overthrowing it; and sapping its foundations, and turning off from the home circle, all the purifying efficacy of christian motives; while he lauds virginity, as the only substantial virtue—the virtue of angels. At the same time he labours to give practical effect to this pernicious doctrine, by fomenting the dangerous excitement which led young women to aspire to these high honours. With the natural and inevitable consequences before his eyes, consequences fatal, as he acknowledges, to the piety of *many*, and to the honour of the church—he goes on to urge and exaggerate this pestiferous delusion. It went forward. All, in their turn, lent their aid to promote it: Augustine followed, and with all his might defended and applauded holy virginity—the celibacy of the clergy, and the ascetic doctrine.—

What was the working of this scheme of morals?—Had we no other testimony than that of Augustine himself, so cautiously given†, there would be no room for reasonable doubt. To look no further than to the Epistle to Aurelius, bishop of Carthage, it is

* The gross prevarication of the evidence to which some of my critics have allowed themselves, on so desperate an occasion, to have recourse, I shall find another opportunity for adverting to. My critic, in this instance, need not fear that I shall pass him by unnoticed.

† What means this 'plura sunt quæ de vita nostra et conversatione deflerem, quæ nollem per litteras ad te venire, si inter cor meum et cor tuum ulla essent ministeria præter os meum et aures tuos?' Epist. 22.

evident that the christianized populace of his charge were then in full course along the broad road of superstitious profligacy. Augustine remonstrated—wept—groaned—trembled—preached—wrote, and finally bequeathed to the world his high approval of a system which had already nearly or quite extinguished domestic piety throughout christendom, and had brought the general standard of morals down to the very lowest level. Salvian following close on his steps, mournfully walks over the ruins of the christian world; and when he comes to Carthage, he finds it the home of every unclean thing! Is there no lesson in all this?

At Carthage, 'in urbe Christiana, in urbe Ecclesiastica,' the last enormities of a debauched people, were not merely universally, but publicly, and under the very eye of the magistrates, perpetrated; and that without shame,—'videbant judices, et acquiescebant.' Of those who, as he foresaw, would be irritated by this testimony, our author demands, whether any parallel wickedness could be found among the barbarians; or if found was not condemned, repressed, and punished (p. 284); and he affirms of the Vandals especially, that, though exposed to the temptations of sudden wealth, and having the opportunity to learn every vice from the people they conquered, they nevertheless had preserved the simplicity and purity of their own manners (p. 287), and used all means in their power for restoring public virtue, or decency at least; and that, in the measures they adopted with this view, they exhibited equal mildness and firmness.

In his eighth book—or the fragment of it which remains, Salvian justifies the boldness he had used in arraigning the vices of his christian contemporaries;—he reverts to the case of the Carthaginian church, in which, as it appears, christianity, notwithstanding its nominal predominance, only shared the homage of the people, who, like the mixed population of Samaria, 'feared the Lord, and served their idols:'—he also states the curious fact that a 'religious person' hardly dared to show himself within the city;—and we may be willing to allow that this odium, attaching to the order, *in such a place*, was to the credit of the monks; among whom, no doubt, there were many devout and blameless men, and these in Carthage would of course be the objects of popular hatred.

We pause for a moment, in our course; this being a proper place for adverting to some specific objections which have been vehemently urged against certain passages in the preceding numbers.—

—The nicene church principles are not the same thing as popery;—nor are the Oxford Tract writers the restorers (or not intentionally so) of popery.—The two systems differ *theologically*, in several points that must be allowed to be important; and they differ in their relation to *ourselves*, politically and ecclesiastically, so obtrusively as to have hidden from our view THE SPIRITUAL AND THE MORAL IDENTITY of the two.

The two systems, in their spiritual aspect, as considered in relation to genuine christianity, are barely to be distinguished, the one as effectively eclipsing the glory and beauty of God's salvation as the other: yet the one, as well as the other, retaining enough of the rudiments of Truth to support the piety of a few;—and both setting before the multitude a doctrine fatal to the soul.

As to the visible and direct influence of the two systems upon the morals of a community, while the two are broadly the same in their result, there *is* yet a difference, clearly in favour of romanism, or let us say of popery, and which may be established, in the most satisfactory and conclusive manner, by an appeal to facts, rigorously and impartially adduced.

In *this* sense then, and how much soever it may jar with notions that have been very generally entertained, and whatever high offence the assertion may give to certain persons, I here distinctly repeat my affirmation that romanism was a reform (or, if there be any other word of nearly the same meaning, but more agreeable to our ears) a reform, or a correction of the nicene church system. In thus reiterating this unacceptable assertion, I am prepared, if required to do so, to defend my ground by copious citations of historical and ecclesiastical evidence; and particularly by an appeal to the writings of the early popes, and to the acts of councils.*

As an inference from this advisedly-made assertion, I am prepared to say That, considered as a question affecting the morals

* That prodigious collection, the Acta Conciliorum, affords abundant evidence to this effect.

of the people, it were better for us to return without reserve to the church of Rome (horrid supposition as it is) than to surrender ourselves to the system which Basil, Ambrose, Chrysostom, the Gregories, and Augustine bequeathed to the nations. Nicene church principles, as now attempted to be put in the room of the principles of the Reformation, if in some points *theologically* better, or less encumbered, than the popery of the council of Trent, would, as I verily believe, more quickly and certainly deluge England with fanatical debauchery, than would *such* romanism as the church of Rome would, at this moment, gladly establish among us.

Leo the Great, the contemporary of Salvian (and the same is true of Gregory the Great, and of Hildebrand) an upright, and probably a good man, looking abroad upon that wild chaos of moral enormities which Salvian describes, and seeing the professedly christian world to be wallowing in abominations from which heathens would have shrunk, and which barbarian hordes blushed to witness, entertained, with a pious zeal, and pursued with a righteous magnanimity, the project of reform. With this purpose in view, he well felt that a power must be consolidated, such as should be competent to deal with the most powerful delinquents.—Salvian's testimony, especially that part of it which, as coming more within the province of the civil historian, I have passed over, and which nothing but the consciousness of truth could have emboldened him to utter, this testimony clearly proves that the universal corruption, even in its most loathsome forms, enjoyed the protection of the rich and powerful, and that it was formally licensed by the magisterial class.

What then could be done?—Augustine, in referring to the outrageous debaucheries which had long attended the church festivals, affirms his belief that no remedy could be found short of the interference of a general council. Leo, and his statesman-like successors, if they did not theoretically know, yet practically knew, that, when a widely-extended social system has fallen into the lowest condition of confusion, and has lost the last energies of virtue, it must no longer be looked to as competent to its own regeneration. If restored at all, it must be by a single mind and hand. There would be no hope but in the steadily directed intensity

of a spiritual monarchy, based on the profoundest principles—in harmony with human nature—aided by factitious assumptions, which men of all nations would bow to, and already possessed of prescriptive reverence, and a usage of appeal.

Leo, and others treading in his steps—and some of them with very honest intentions, as well as a holy ambition, bent all their endeavours toward the one indispensable preliminary of consolidating the hierarchical influence, around the chair of Peter. This done, the uproar might be stilled; the church might be purified; or at least a tide might be turned into the vast SENTINA ECCLESIASTICA, which should prevent the accumulation of impurities, and freshen a little its contents from time to time; and especially a force might be employed which should compel a profligate magistracy to admit, and to enforce necessary laws against destructive vices. Popes, individually, and according to their personal temper, looked more to the great *moral intention* of the papal supremacy, or more to the mere aggrandizement of the church; and at length the latter came, as was natural, to be the almost exclusive object—the former only qualifying the latter, or supplying it with a needful pretext. So it was with Innocent III.

Meantime a conservative and sanative power was established, extending its influence over western christendom; and in fact a check was given to the abounding profligacy. Rome fixed her hook in the nose of leviathan: the beast was curbed, and Europe was rescued from a condition which, if ever it last long, can be remedied only by the extermination of the people. The nicene divines, headstrong in their ascetic fanaticism, and unused to admit calm calculations of the remoter tendencies of things, had lent their credit to a system which *could* have no other issue than that which it had; and which Salvian has described in its frightful details.

Popery then, was a reform of the antecedent church system; inasmuch as it created and employed a force, counteractive of the evils which that system, and which itself too, could not but generate. The great men of the fourth century believed that the system contained within itself a counteractive power. A few years furnished lamentable evidence of the fallacy of such a belief. The popes snatched at the only alternative—the creating a power *exterior* to the system, and assuming to be independent of it, by

virtue of the special authority vested in the successors of Peter. *This* scheme was practicable; and Time has pronounced its eulogium. Terrible as is popery, it is infinitely less terrible than its own naked substance, apart from its form. If at the present moment there are popish nations in a moral condition almost as degraded as that into which christendom at large had sunk in the fifth century, it is because the corrective energies of the papal hierarchy have long been dormant.

In what way the nicene church system necessarily brought about the universal ulceration of the social body, and how it effected this so speedily, is no mystery; nor can any but the most infatuated minds fail to discern a connexion of causes which stands prominent on the surface of the facts. Thus for example (as every modern writer of any independence has observed) when the doctors of the church, one and all, favoured, and by their declamatory eloquence promoted, those superstitious usages which were as near as possible akin to the still-existing and ancient polytheism; when they taught a rude fanatical populace to commend their petitions to celestial beings, and to do, in a word, every thing they had been used to do—using only new names, are we to be amazed at the consequence? Let us listen to Chrysostom, Gregory Nyssen, Jerome, and Theodoret, on these very topics, and then affect to wonder when we find, not merely pagan *vices* mixed with christian ceremonies; but, after a little while, an actual and open admixture of the rites of the ancient polytheism, with the festivals of the church.

But there is even more in this connexion than may appear, or than modern writers have adverted to. If we heartily believe that christianity is from God, we are bound to look beyond the obvious operation of visible causes, when considering the course of events connected with its history.—It was indeed *natural*, and inevitable too, that the lamentable indiscretion of the nicene doctors should have had the effect of re-establishing polytheism on ground which the gospel had for a while occupied; but this was not all. With the Old Testament before us, and its stern rebukes of idolatry in our recollection, can we indeed persuade ourselves to believe that, to the divine eye, it was a venial imprudence only, and a matter almost of indifference, when preachers of the

gospel, or men professing to be such, were seen, with a finger pointed to the skies, directing the people to supplicate and confide in, the powerful aid of the Mother of God, or in the auspicious patrocinium of St. Joseph, of St. Thomas, of St. Cyprian? Was no notice taken of practices like these in Heaven? Or are we to suppose that a system of adaptation was thenceforward admitted, such as should, in condescension to the folly of man, abrogate that mediatorial scheme which had been announced by the apostles?

Those may believe this who will.—The reformers did not believe it;—nor did the founders of the english protestant church believe it; on the contrary, they spoke of these 'foul superstitions,' and 'abominable idolatries,' in terms fitting the subject, although, with a strange inadvertency, they inculpated the papacy, and exculpated the very men from whose lips the papacy had received this impiety.*

But if we are to think and speak in a manner becoming christians, of this worshipping of the creature, then must we believe that a church, thus abandoned to idolatries, would be left to rush forward into the abyss of moral pollution also. The writer whom I have been citing—'the Jeremiah of his age,' tells his contemporaries, and with reason, that the barbarians had been

* 'What intolerable ill blasphemy of God, and ethnical idolatry is this, to admit and teach the invocation of saints departed out of this world .... I hope this detestable error is come to light, and all men taught to pray as the scripture canonical teacheth.' So spake the holy Hooper: we moderns have learned a softer language. 'The direct invocation of saints is a dangerous practice, as tending to give, and often giving, to creatures the honour and reliance due to the Creator alone.' Tracts, No. 38, p. 12. Not so bishop Hall, whom these writers *profess* to be following. 'These *foul superstitions*, are not more heinous than new; and such as we have justly abhorred to take part with the practisers of them.' The Tract writers *would* not profess to feel with the worthies of the english church on these subjects—they *could* not do so, and yet retain their allegiance to the nicene doctors, who were the real authors of this 'intolerable ill blasphemy' and 'foul superstition.' Nothing is more afflictive than to hear men, such as were some of these doctors, unscrupulously aiding the gross and ignorant rabble that crowded the churches, in their return to the worship of divinities, male and female. Is it to be believed that men who thus fatally seduced the church into flagrant idolatries, were all the time acting under the immediate guidance of the Lord? This heavy topic, fatal as it is to the Tract enterprise, I hope to spread before modern readers, giving them ample means of forming their own opinion concerning it.

sent by God to chastise them for their flagitious course of life: this was true, but then this course of life, stained with the vices of ancient Canaan, was the fruit of the demonolatry into which they had long before fallen.

We now return to our first question concerning the alleged pre-eminent purity of the nicene church. In doing so, let us then make sure work as we go:

The date of Salvian's work is not, that I find, disputed by any modern writer; nor has any attempt been made to call his veracity in question. Butler, and the editors of the Thesaurus Patrum quote him as authority; nor can any one, I think, read the De Gubernatione throughout, and not recognise the clear characteristics of intelligent honesty, as well as a fearless adherence to christian principles. As to the precise date of the book, it is of no vital consequence to my argument; — that is to say, whether it was written, as alleged, in the year 440, or ten or twenty years later: much later it could not have been.

Besides, Salvian's evidence is sustained by corroboratory testimony, and the same things, in substance, are to be gathered from the contemporary writers of the eastern, and alexandrian churches.*

Now there are but three suppositions that can be thought of, as applicable to the facts, thus attested :—the first is—

That, within a space of twenty or thirty years, at the longest, the church universal had fallen from a state of eminent purity and spirituality, to a condition so desperately corrupt, as to resemble that of the nations of ancient Canaan—nations whose measure of iniquity was filled up. This supposition is altogether inadmissible. Such has never been the course of human affairs. So sudden a transition from one extreme of moral being to another, never occurs. Or even if we could imagine it, what interpretation could *then* be put upon our Lord's promise to be with his church always :—a church which was eminently holy yesterday, and which to-day is utterly abandoned! In truth the actual evidence forbids any such supposition; for the nicene writers, notwithstanding the restraints of professional discretion, furnish

* Evidence to this effect will be found in the Supplement.

abundant indications of just such a state of things as we should suppose to have preceded the chaotic confusion of the fifth century. The second supposition is the opposite of the first; and it is this, namely—

That the church, in the *fourth* century was altogether in as deplorable a condition as we find it to have been in the *fifth*. Now not only should one be reluctant to admit so melancholy a belief, but I think it does not consist with the evidence, temperately considered. There is good reason to believe that things had been better in the times of Ambrose and Chrysostom than they were afterwards; and no doubt a remarkable declension did take place, just at the moment when the cluster of eminent men, so often named, sunk from their places. This declension, in fact, was only the natural product of the church system, when it was no longer counteracted by the personal efforts and influence of those very men. The thir supposition, and which alone appears to be admissible, involves what I have all along assumed concerning the nicene era, namely—

That, while there were then to be found, here and there, MANY INDIVIDUALS, eminent for piety (according to the dark notions of the age) and who, for the most part, had fled into the wilderness, or had shut themselves up in monasteries, the mass of the christianized community—the accredited recipients of the sacraments, exhibited scarcely any indications of genuine spirituality; while the morals of those who crowded the churches ranged far below a mean level; and in a word, that a degree of grossness, and of violence—a sensuality, a frivolity, and a fierceness, marked the social body (of all ranks) to which a parallel could *now* be found nowhere, in protestant countries; and only in catholic countries where no protestant or biblical influence has ever been admitted.

If *this* supposition be nearly correct, then my conclusion follows—and let it be either candidly admitted, or shown to be illogical—

That, if any peculiar deference be indeed due from the modern church to the nicene, it must be claimed *on some other ground* than that of the pre-eminent sanctity of that church, considered as a whole.

Now that this supposition is in fact the true one, will not I am

confident be disputed by any but those to whom argument and evidence would be addressed in vain. The specific disorders, the festival drunkenness, the impurity, the rapacity, the play-going infatuation, and the sacrilegious revelry attendant upon the church holidays, and which Salvian declares to have reached the last stage of mad riot in his times, are the frequent objects of vehement remonstrances, addressed to professed christians, by the nicene preachers. The readers of Chrysostom, Ephraim, Basil, Jerome, Augustine, *will not deny this:* an opponent must be desperate who should attempt it. The broad facts have been admitted by every candid modern writer in this department, and I do not here adduce the evidence, partly because I will not suppose that the contrary would be maintained by any well-informed opponent, but chiefly because — unpleasing as it is in itself, I think it is superseded by evidence, even more conclusive, of another kind; and this we shall presently bring forward.

But I think I know whence arises an impression, fondly entertained by many ingenuous minds, and which will not soon be dispelled, even by the most abundant testimony. While spending hours, days, months, in the continuous perusal of writings like those of Augustine, Chrysostom, Basil, and Ephraim, notwithstanding one's decisive disapproval of very much which is there found, and notwithstanding the frequent occurrence of passages which, to the eye of the cool historical inquirer, indicate plainly what was the general condition of the church; one is yet fain to suppose that so much fervour must have sprung from, or must have surrounded itself with, a corresponding intensity of religious feeling. It is painful to admit the contrary. But if truth be our object, we shall be willing to submit our agreeable supposition to a test; now, beside the evidence above referred to, and which meets the eye on so many pages of these very writers, there is another mode of ascertaining how far it is safe to trust to such an inference.—

Let us then take the middle of the fifth century—the very period over which Salvian's evidence extends, and at which time, as is admitted, almost every trace of the purifying influence of christian principles had disappeared from the broad surface of society: now at this very time, when the church was denounced

as having become a sink of pollution, and within the limits of which every enormity was openly perpetrated, there were flourishing several noted writers, not in any sense inferior to their predecessors, either as to fervour, or as to doctrinal purity. We may name the instances, and some of them are strikingly pertinent. Among Salvian's contemporaries are to be reckoned, first, that great authority for church principles — Vincent of Lerins, whose logical instrument for ascertaining orthodoxy, how perfect soever it might be, should never be referred to by those who have not taken the pains to inform themselves that an unimpeachable creed, even the holding every point of the Athanasian symbol 'whole and uncorrupt,' may easily consist, and has actually consisted, in thousands, and tens of thousands of instances, with a course of life in the last degree infamous. Men far worse than adulterers—utinam hæc essent sola quæ diximus—and men accustomed to butcher their slaves without remorse, have been sticklers for every iota of trinitarian doctrine (and for the spotless virginity of Mary as well) and have, according to Vincent's careful definition, been 'christians to a point.' The ingenuous modern reader of the 'Commonitorium,' if uninformed of *history*, imagines nothing else but that he is listening to a voice, echoing the blameless confession of a holy church. Yet around the very islet to which Vincent had retired, this catholic church was wallowing in pollutions at the sight of which heretical barbarians blushed.

A dozen less noted names might be mentioned, whose writings (they were *all* recluses) not less than those of much better times, would suggest a supposition directly contradicted by history: such are Hilary of *Arles*, Prosper of Aquitaine, and Eucherius, a companion of Vincent in the monastery of Lerins. Or, turning eastward, we find, at the same time, Isidore of Pelusium, inferior to few in calm judgment, and apparent fervour. Or Nilus, the admirable anchoret of Sinai, whose epistles might be perused with advantage by modern christians. He again *seems* to represent a state of things which, as it happens, certain passages in his writings show, convincingly, not to have then existed. Especially he denounces the monks of his time as a set of graceless vagabonds. But we need go no further than to the signal instance of Theodoret, who flourished from toward the close of

the fourth century, to the middle of the fifth. If in any instance it might seem safe to extend an inference from the character of a writer, to the character of the age, it might be so in this; but in fact, all such inferences are unsafe;—they are so in every age, and most especially in an age when every man of sincere religious temper, if he did not actually shut himself up in a cloister, yet made it his chief endeavour to exclude all thought and knowledge of what was going on in the open world.

The vague impression then which we might receive from the writers of the *fourth* century, as to the state of the christian community at that time, arises with equal force from a perusal of their successors, in the *fifth*, in reference to which period it cannot possibly be admitted. I am inclined to think that there are many, at the present moment, who, from a feeling which ought to be respected, are refusing to convince themselves of the truth concerning the nicene church, and are lending their valuable names to the Oxford Tract delusion, entirely, or nearly so, on the ground of the amiable prejudice now adverted to. Such persons I would respectfully request, first to inform themselves authentically of the state of the church (so called) during the reigns of Valentinian and Theodosius II.; then to converse a little with the christian authors of that period; and lastly, to ask themselves whether, apart from evidence of another kind, they would not have been apt to think just as favourably of the *later*, as they have been used to do of the *earlier* period, and on the very same ground, namely, that of a supposition which proves itself to be fallacious? In a word, on every principle of justice, if Chrysostom be entitled to confer a reputation upon the one age, Theodoret and Isidore ought to be allowed to do the same for the other. But this method of vouching we find to be altogether delusive.

How strikingly does this mode of estimating the manners of an age prove itself fallacious in the very instance of the devout bishop of Hippo! The *merely devout* modern reader would not notice the indications here and there occurring of the condition of the mass within which Augustine moved. The more sharp-sighted historical inquirer would perhaps gather nearly the truth from those indications. But what are the facts. Hippo, not very remote from Carthage, could not but have partaken of its moral charac-

teristics—in truth Salvian's report expressly embraces the entire region. His report is particularly explicit and decisive in this instance, and what he alleges concerning the desperate wickedness of the Carthaginian people, calling themselves christians, affecting, as it does, the reputation of many public persons, cannot have been substantially untrue. Neither is it credible that a depravity so deep and universal could have come about in a day. That moral condition of the people of North Africa with which Augustine was actually conversant, must have been only a shade or two less dark than that which Salvian describes. But why should not such a state of things make itself more apparent than it does in the writings of Augustine? A modern writer and bishop of kindred spirit, occupying a similar position, would doubtless be far more explicit. The answer is not difficult; for, in the first place, the false maxim which impelled some of the best men of the ancient church to support its credit even by the means of deliberate fabrications, and by lending themselves to manufactured wonders, impelled them also to observe a very ill-judged delicacy in regard to the crimes and depravity of the orthodox party. The indications of this false discretion are abundant: the church was then beset, on one side by the adherents of the ancient polytheism, who were prompt to avail themselves of any admissions unfavourable to the now dominant religion; on another side by numerous sects of the Manichean class; and Augustine's treatise, de Moribus Ecclesiæ Catholicæ, affords proof enough of the presence of the restraining motive I am referring to; then again the civil, as well as the doctrinal contention between the trinitarian and arian parties, at that time struggling for supremacy, as well as between the church and other classes of dissidents, all tended in the same direction, and absolutely prohibited any faithful and explicit acknowledgments of delinquencies on the catholic side. We must not expect more of this sort than we actually find, which however is quite enough to satisfy an impartial inquirer.*

* I have already referred to one passage of this kind. Let the reader, after perusing Salvian, and after duly considering all the circumstances of the evidence, consider whether the following expressions do not involve substantially what we have assumed. The convent over which his sister had long presided,

But there is yet a consideration, materially affecting the present question, and which, if duly regarded, would remove all remaining difficulty from the subject. A grossness of the moral sense attached to antiquity of which we moderns—at least in protestant countries, do not easily form an idea. Men were accustomed from infancy to look with indifference upon such things as are now seen only in India—the mingled horrors and pollutions of idol worship. Besides, the tendency of the ascetic life was to train those who adopted it in the habit of glaring, in vacant apathy, upon the open world, which they regarded as abandoned to sensuality and cupidity. Inasmuch as little or no virtue was diffused through the social mass, religious men—themselves recluses, did not look for it there, and were not shocked when they found it to be wanting. They cast their eye abroad for a moment, and then walked away to their cloisters—to sing, to pray, to fast, and, perhaps, to write books of devotion, from the pages of which it is not easy to gather proof of the fact that all around them was little better than a slough. Thus it is that so many folios have come down to our times, which, if they are to be taken as samples, or as proof of the state of the christian community at the time when they were written, must lead us immensely far from the truth.

This truth there are, however, other and conclusive means of ascertaining—We are now asking whether a deference can be claimed from us toward the church in the nicene era, on the ground of its *pre-eminent* sanctity? Let us then remit the inquiry concerning the morals of the *mass* of professed christians, which we

continued, during the presidency of her successor, to afford Augustine consolation, amid abounding disorders, and yet even this sacred enclosure was disturbed by frequent broils. Nevertheless comparing this scene with what he beheld elsewhere, he says, 'Soleo gaudere de vobis, et inter *tanta scandala* quibus ubique abundat hic mundus, aliquando consolari' .... 'Hæc in vobis bona.... inter multas tempestates, quibus ex aliis malis quatitur cor meum, solet utcumque requiescere.' Epist. 211. If indeed it existed around him, why should not Augustine have found consolation in a church *composed of heads of families*—husbands and wives, 'walking in all the commandments of the Lord blameless,' and rearing their children in the fear of God, and the faith of Christ? If we are to take our notions of christianity from the New Testament, *this* is what we are to look for when we are in search of a holy church. As to monks and nuns, they are beings of whom we know nothing on sacred ground.

presume no one will affirm to have reached even a mean level; and turn to what may be regarded as the nucleus of the church. What were its characteristics; or what were they as related to the standard given us in the canonical scriptures?

If we have touched this subject before, we shall endeavour now so to retouch it as to exclude the misrepresentations that have been attempted, and to confirm, by some fresh evidence, what may have been imperfectly substantiated.

Are we then to take our notions of christian sanctity and spirituality from the apostolic writings, or from the patristic volumes? If from the latter, then I may as well at once abandon my position. If from the former, then it is easily proved that, although there might be, and no doubt was, much devout feeling in the ancient church, and many admirable instances of fortitude and self-denial, there was extremely little of what deserves to be called christian holiness. We affirm that there *was not, in fact*; and we affirm that there *could not* have been; because the first principle of true holiness had been lost sight of.

But let us exclude exceptions on every side; and if in any case it be possible, let us render our inference, whatever it may be, a conclusive one.

It might be alleged perhaps that there *was* a pure and spiritual church, in the nicene era, of which no memorial or monument has survived.—Be it so, and how gladly should we admit the supposition! But if so, either the extant writers were ignorant of the existence of this *true* contemporary church, or they rejected its claims, and refused to recognise it. In either case we must refuse to acknowledge *them* as our guides in spiritual matters.—If we are to follow *any* human guides, we will take them from the holy and spiritually minded church, find it where we may. Such a church we may well believe to have subsisted in the apocalyptic wilderness; but then that church of which Jerome was the spokesman, loaded *this* with execrations.

Or again: When we come to cite instances illustrative of the character and temper of the loftiest sort of sanctity known to the nicene authorities, it may be said—'Oh, these passages ought to be regarded as spurious; they are interpolations—they are unworthy of the reputation of the writers, under whose auspices they

have come down to us.' * Let this be granted, but then what is the consequence? After we have excepted those instances to which an exact modern criticism has affixed the brand of spuriousness—and of which we are now to make no use, if we go on to suggest a *general and indefinite scepticism*, as to the genuineness of the extant ecclesiastical literature, or if we hold ourselves free to decline admitting as genuine whatever we may not approve of, or may not think creditable to the reputation of great men, then how will it be possible to establish 'church principles;' or indeed any thing else, by these means? There is no longer any firm footing in this region. What one party alleges as authority, its opponents are free to reject as 'probably an interpolation,' or as unworthy of the writer among whose pages it occurs. There can be no end to a controversy that is open, in this way, and at every step, to indefinite surmises; or rather, common sense would quickly bring it to a close, by turning away from so hopeless an argument.

In what follows, therefore, I shall cite, without scruple, whatever has not been proved to be spurious, or which is liable to no *critical* exception. An opponent may then do as he pleases;—that is to say, either admit this evidence; or, in rejecting it on conjectural ground merely, or because he does not relish it, involve every thing else in doubt. To reject entire treatises, or particular passages, on this ground, is either to beg the question; or to remove it beyond the range of conclusive argument.

* Cave, who carefully distinguishes between the genuine and the spurious writings attributed to the Fathers, so far as the admitted principles of modern criticism had then availed to discriminate the one from the other, not seldom goes on to suggest a doubt; or he even affirms an interpolation, on no other ground than that of the assumed incongruity of the passage with the reputation of the author! But if this rule is to be allowed, there is an end of all historical investigation, as to the opinions of a remote age. We first form our notion of what a writer *ought* to be charged with; and then reject as spurious whatever goes beyond that measure! It is thus that Cave disposes of the Life of St. Antony—'Quæ vero extat hodie, aut Athanasii non est, aut multùm interpolata. Fatendum sanè est plurima ex Athanasii libro de Vita Antonii loca, à Palladio, Socrate, Damasceno, et aliis citata, inibi reperiri; plurima tamen ibidem haberi nugatoria, planè ac *tanto viro indigna*, negari nequit.' Hist. Liter. p. 123. With respect to the present argument, concerning nicene church principles, it is indifferent whether the allegations of Daillé (Traicté de l'Employ des Saincts Pères) or of James (Treatise of the Corruption of Scripture, Councils and Fathers, &c. 1611) and of others, who have followed in the same path, be made good or not.

The reader's strict attention to the principle on which we are now to reason is here requested.—

—When, with the utmost allowable breadth of charitable feeling—the charity 'which hopeth all things, and believeth all things,' we are endeavouring to define christianity so largely as that the smallest number possible of those who have called themselves by this name, may be excluded, many concessions may perhaps be justifiable—concessions, either to the influence of widely-prevailing errors, which men have adopted without inquiry; or to the peculiarities of individual disposition, or of external position. All this may be lawful, if still, and for ourselves, we hold to the invariable standard of Truth, and be on our guard against a latitudinarian indifference.

But our work is altogether of another sort when we are inquiring, *as we now are*, for a PRE-EMINENTLY HOLY CHURCH. It is one thing to ask, whether such and such individuals, or societies, may not be accounted christian, notwithstanding their many and grievous errors? but quite another thing to inquire concerning individuals, or churches, whether they should be considered as having been *pre-eminently holy?* In the one case the question is—How far the Rule may admit of relaxation, or may be susceptible of a wide and lax interpretation, so as not to be altogether nullified, or essentially infringed. In the other case the question turns upon the strict, or most absolute interpretation of the Rule. The one is a case of extenuation, the other a case of rigour; in the one case we are treading upon the penumbra of an illuminated space, and are endeavouring to describe a perimeter as remote as may be from the brightness of the centre; and yet not wholly excluded from its radiations: in the other case we are looking toward that very centre. The process therefore, in the one case, is the very reverse of the process in the other. Let then this be borne in mind. Grant it, that the self-deceived fanatic who spent thirty years on the top of a pillar might yet *possibly* be a christian; but are there now any who, if the question were asked, 'where shall we find a faultless sample of christian faith and holiness,' would point us to the weather-beaten Symeon? Such indeed was the reply of the ancient church; but it is to be hoped that, even the

most devoted admirers of antiquity, would hesitate to give a similar answer.

How far we are really at liberty, even at the suggestion of charity, to relax and extenuate the divine Rule, may well be doubted; and perhaps, in modern times, this sort of liberality has been carried to its extreme. But it would clearly be absurd and unwarrantable—equally illogical and presumptuous, to compromise, in any degree, the integrity and glory of that Rule when we are to inquire concerning the *highest rate* of christian piety.

Now what is our Rule? Where is our standard? From whose instructions are we to gather our notions of an Eminently Holy Church? Protestants soon find their reply to such questions; and therefore they will deal in a very summary manner with the pretensions of any church in behalf of which a claim of extraordinary or exemplary sanctity is advanced.

Our method in this instance is the simplest possible, nor can it be otherwise than conclusive. First, name your MODEL CHURCH; then specify the particular instances which the authorities in that church were unanimous in pointing to, as samples of the highest style of piety with which they were acquainted — the samples which, without hesitation, the church in question would have singled out, and made its boast of, as its glory.

The next step is to adduce the authentic contemporary memorials of these very instances—the unquestioned documents of the loftiest species of christian excellence, according to the notions of that church and time.

The third step is to bring these documents into immediate comparison with the inspired Standard of Christian Piety: that is to say, the only standard to which we (protestants) are willing to appeal. And in doing so, if it plainly appear that a dissimilarity, as to principles, as to ends, as to acts and courses of conduct, distinguishes the two, then our conclusion is peremptory — That such a church, whatever might have been its merits, was not preeminently holy. It may have been adorned by admirable instances of heroic devotion, or by particular virtues; but, taken altogether, if it be found broadly to differ from the standard, the standard itself would be compromised by an attempt to recommend such a church as exemplary.

In pursuing this method we make an ample reserve in favour of whatever may, by any means, be embraced within the arms of christian sympathy:—but, at the same time, when the question is, was such or such a church pre-eminently holy, we can feel no remorse in indignantly rejecting its pretensions, nay, in repelling them, as an insult to christianity itself, if, on full investigation, and after an ample exposure of its own carefully chosen and most select instances, they show an outline and a colour between which and those of the only standard there is barely a shade or a point of resemblance.

Let then the reader deliberately make his choice in an alternative which is equally momentous and free from ambiguity.—The apostolic writings, in the several modes of precept, example, incidental allusion, and announcement of principles, embody CHRISTIAN PIETY. What a christian man should be, we thence learn with no difficulty; and whatever is not included in the apostolic model of piety, we may confidently pronounce to be no ingredient of genuine virtue.

But the church which is, at this moment, the subject of controversy—that church of which the principles, practices, and notions are embodied in the patristic volumes, offers to us *another* model of piety, and we shall see of what sort. The two are not coincident, and if we adopt the one, we must reject the other.

We shall therefore now consider some selected samples of Ancient Piety—samples deliberately offered to us, and assented to, as well by the church at large, as by its official representatives. And as we proceed, we shall collate such instances as are the most decisive, with the corresponding points of the apostolic standard.

When touching this subject in an earlier number, I adduced instances of what, in the nicene age, were accounted to be examples of the rarest excellence; and in these instances I showed the total absence of evangelic principles; and they afford, I think, conclusive proof of what was there alleged, namely, the departure of the church, at that time, from evangelic simplicity. What we had then in view was the illustration of a particular point; we are now looking round rather more widely, and must adopt a different method.

As in every age pious biographies have been in favour with devout persons, and have been found to furnish the readiest and most efficacious means for cherishing the religious sentiment, so there have not been wanting industrious compilers of such narratives of christian excellence; and these collections, when they have come from the hands of persons officially accredited in their times, and who, from their position and connexions, have enjoyed the best means for selecting, from a larger mass, what might be the most edifying, are to be regarded as possessed of a sort of public authentication, and as exhibiting, with every advantage, the church of that age, might we say, in her holiday trim, or as she would have wished to be seen by posterity.

In this very way the nicene church has handed down her own portrait for our inspection, delineated by several hands. Most of the great orators of the fourth century have left us sketches of this sort, in their commemorative orations, and to some of which we may perhaps refer; but we possess also some collections, expressly and carefully compiled by prominent persons, as pattern-books, for the benefit of all. Many of the individuals who are the subjects of these memoirs are mentioned by the contemporary writers, and especially by the historians of the period: at the same time the collection itself is referred to, and authenticated.

It was not until the church had enjoyed rest for some while, that these collectors addressed themselves to their tasks; but, in selecting their instances, they, as was natural, went back, not indeed to a remote time, but just to the period which was then closing, and concerning which ample information might be obtained from living authorities. We are therefore to listen to writers, themselves belonging to the nicene era, and representing its characteristic notions, who report the behaviour and sentiments of men of the suffering era—the time of the pagan persecutions, as well as of those who lived when the principles they had adopted were allowed to work their natural effects, free from disturbance.

The instances now to be adduced are not to be disposed of by a vague admission of the folly and error that attaches to them.—Either the ancient church had indeed better samples of piety to produce, or it had not. If it had, and this we are very willing to suppose, then the great writers who are now to be our masters, must

in choosing the worse, and in neglecting the better, have acted under the influence of an infatuation which ought to forbid our following them.—If the ancient church had no better materials, then what was that church? The restorers of antiquity should maturely consider the consequences involved in either of these alternatives.

Another probable mode of evading the inference, now in view, may be to allege any doubt that may possibly attach to the works cited. I have already offered an opponent an alternative, in reference, generally, to such doubts; but now more particularly have to say, *first*, that nothing much better than a surmise has been advanced concerning the genuineness of any of the books presently to be cited; and *secondly*, that, if those very passages were selected which most offend our notions of rational piety, they may be paralleled from the unquestioned writings of Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, and Chrysostom: in some cases the very facts are vouched for or reported by these writers. What will it avail to resent narratives as spurious, or interpolated, which are not more revolting than others that are incontestably genuine?

It appears that the earliest (extant) collection of religious memoirs is that called the Lausiac History, and which is attributed to Palladius, bishop of Helenopolis in Bithynia.* This good man, for such we may well believe him to have been, and unquestionably devout and sincere, after spending some years in visiting the most celebrated schools of the ascetic philosophy, and after himself practising the discipline of the desert and monastery, until his health gave way, returned toward his native land, and was ordained a bishop A.D. 401. He had been the personal friend of Chrysostom, whose sufferings he shared, and of whom he composed a memoir, which is extant.†

Whatever might be the character of the most approved piety of that age, the author of the Lausiac History was thoroughly conversant with its principles, and with its modes of expression,

* In an earlier number (p. 100,) I declined quoting this book: I do so now because my opponents have relieved me from any scruples which might stand in the way of such citations.

† Whether the author of the 'Dialogue' be the same, or another Palladius, does not affect our present purpose.

verbal and practical:—he speaks of the things which he had seen, and heard, and handled, and been personally concerned with. And what if we should roundly affirm that this choice collection —this authentic sample of patristic christianity, presents barely so much as a particle of the christianity of the apostles? Certain virtues of the christian code are indeed very prominently set forth; but then they are severed from the principles which should animate them, and they are so exaggerated as scarcely to be entitled to the designation they assume. Humility and obedience are christian virtues;—but we really make a great concession in allowing those sacred terms to be applied to the behaviour of a man who waters a stick for a year, in meek submission to the commands of his superior.

Yet it is true that the piety of Palladius's saints finds a place in the apostolic writings; for example, it is described by Paul in the epistle to the Colossians,* with an exactness so marked that no one can affect not to recognise the portrait: it is included too in the prediction of that mystery which had begun to evolve itself, even in the apostolic age; it is specified in each of its characteristic articles, when the apostasy of the latter times is foreshown;† and again, when the nearly approaching defection is named,‡ as a turning away the ear from the truth, and a being 'turned to fables.' Let the reader carry this last phrase with him, and say whether the things we shall report are indeed sacred verities, which should be connected in our minds with the miracles of Christ and the apostles; or are *Fables*, sometimes ineffably absurd, sometimes in a frightful degree impious. And yet it was toward these very things that the mind of the church was eagerly directed; as by a sort of epidemic infatuation, and by the deliberate endeavours of its leaders.

Palladius (Preface) undertakes his work, as he says, with the view of inciting his readers to follow the worthiest examples on the high path of spiritual exercise, so that they too may win the crown of immortal glory. With several of the heroes whom he is about to commemorate, he had been personally acquainted; and what he relates of others he had received from the lips of their surviving companions; he having, for this very purpose, visited,

* Coloss. ii. 18—23. † 1 Tim. iv. ‡ 2 Tim. iv. 4.

by painful journeys, many cities and towns, and penetrated the wilderness wherever the caverns or huts of the holy men might be found. In this Preface a reference is twice made to the adjuvant intercession of the saints, which might possibly be regarded as ambiguous, if the author's meaning were not determined by the known and ordinary practice of the times.

Our author, in starting, shows himself to be by no means wanting in discretion, of which he gives an instance in the reproof of the extravagances of certain professors of abstinence from wine, whose arrogance was at least equal to their self-command;—'Better,' says he, 'is it to drink wine with reason, than to drink water with ostentation.' Well indeed had it been if the good sense which even shines in the Epistle to Lausus, had ruled all that follows! This however is evident, that it was not from any deficiency, either of natural intelligence, or of education (as with the stupid monks of the middle ages) nor from ignorance of the Scriptures, but wholly from the depraving influence of a vicious religious system, that the men we have now to do with surrendered themselves to extravagance, to credulity, to folly, and that they too often lent themselves to blasphemous frauds.

Palladius commences his Memoirs with the name of Isidore, (not the Isidore of Pelusium) presbyter and hospitaller of Alexandria, and who had been ordained (or appointed) by Athanasius himself, and who, if any might have known what christianity is, should not have been ignorant of it. He was about seventy when resorted to by our author; and was then in the highest repute for sanctity. To the day of his death, at eighty-five, he wore no linen beside his φακιαλίον;* he used no bath; he touched no flesh; he never ate to satiety; and yet, by the grace of God he was of such a habit of body that, to look at him, you would have thought he fattened on dainties. Distinguished by his meekness, humility, spirituality, and knowledge of holy Scripture, he commanded the esteem even of his enemies. At table he not unfrequently burst into tears of shame at the thought that he—destined

* φακιαλιον. The lexicographers are not agreed as to the precise meaning of this word; but it appears to intend a part of the sacerdotal attire, and which therefore was worn, of course, at least on public occasions.

to eat angels' food in paradise, should be now partaking of earthly sustenance, in common with the brutes!

Palladius, who was then in the heat of youth, and who needed, for the correction of the flesh, as he allows, not so much the discourses of the wise, as hard fare, and severe bodily labour, was placed by Isidore, for a three years' training, under the guidance of a spiritual director, an eremite, named Dorotheus, who had occupied a stone hut, on the sea-shore, sixty years; this mode of life proved too much for our author's physical powers, and he quitted his master after a short experiment of the ascetic warfare. This saint's habits were in truth severe and squalid in the extreme (*αὐχμώδης λίαν*) and utterly devoid of comforts. His constant employment, during the day, and even under the scorching heat of noon, was to collect stones from the shore, with which he constructed cells for the accommodation of any, following the same course of life, who were unequal to this labour. During the night, and without intermission, he platted ropes of palm-leaves. His daily ration was six ounces of bread, and a bunch of raw herbs, with water.—'Why do you thus slay your body, father, by these excessive toils?'—'I will kill it,' said he, 'for it kills me.' 'And now,' says our author, 'I call God to witness that, during the time I was with him, I never knew him to stretch out his legs! nor ever did he lay himself down to sleep; but sat erect, the night through, at his work—sleeping only in a dozing manner, at his meals, so that in fact the food often fell from his mouth! Once, when his young disciple would have persuaded the saint to lie down to sleep, he took his officious kindness in ill part, and said—'Persuade the angels to sleep, and then try what you can do with a man intent upon his purpose—*σπουδαῖον*.' On a certain day he sent the narrator to the well to fill the pitcher, in readiness for the refection; when it happened that he saw an asp at the bottom of the well! No water did he draw; but ran back crying—We are dead men, father! but he, shaking his head, and smiling, said 'Would you then never drink if the devil should think fit to throw deadly creatures into every well? and going to the well he drew, and having made the sign of the cross upon the water, drank a full draught, saying, 'Where the Cross is (or Saviour) there the malice of Satan is of no avail.'

This same Dorotheus, who must have commenced his religious course in the early part of the fourth century, is formally commemorated by Sozomen, along with others, (lib. vi. c. 29) as a miracle of piety. In furnishing a specimen of this collection I omit the martyrologies, which however, as here related, are far from satisfactory; I omit also the most characteristic of these memoirs, in which decency is more or less grossly violated; and of the rest give, by abridgement, the historic substance, by means of which an idea may be formed of the highest style of the piety of the age.

The story of Amon must be omitted, as well as the miracle so much admired by Athanasius;—let the restorers of antiquity produce it; or that of Pambo, exempt indeed from what is offensive; but indicating, even in the most blameless men of that age, an absolute unconsciousness of evangelic doctrine: no hint is given, even in their last hour, of a hope of justification through faith;—there is humiliation indeed, but no consolation. How was it that men who could repeat, not only a great part of the Scriptures, but large portions of the writings of Athanasius and Basil, should have remained ignorant of the very first truths of christianity, if it had not been that these truths had been lost sight of, on all sides?

The abbot Ammonius, with his two sisters, retired to the wilderness, where he founded a monastery, and they a convent, at a proper distance apart. The people of a neighbouring town desired to have him for their bishop; an honour which he resolutely declined; at length, to rid himself of their importunities he, in their sight, cut off one of his ears, scooping it out from the bottom; and this not availing, he threatened to cut out his tongue. Thus did the holy man get himself excused! It was his custom to apply a red hot iron to his flesh whenever any risings of sinful desire troubled him; in consequence of which practice his body had become a mass of ulcers. To his last day he ate nothing that had been cooked by fire, bread excepted.

The wiles of the demon to induce some of these holy men to set a foot out of their cells, are such as would hardly be imagined;—at one time seven bishops, with their attendants, are sent by the demon, and these, in retiring, expect nothing less than that their friend, Nathaniel, should see them off his premises;—at another

time a youth cries for help and shelter, in fear of being devoured by hyænas; but no help can the hermit afford; thus foiled, the demon vanishes in a whirlwind, with a din of brayings! Once and again our author makes the most solemn appeal to Heaven, in attestation of what he relates. He does so in commencing his account of Macarius, the Egyptian: but of what quality are the things he thus asseverates?—vapid nonsense which would be heard with contempt even by children; and yet with such things was the ancient church occupied and delighted, and that too in an age of learning and intelligence. 'By the arts of the adversary, and for nefarious purposes, a certain lady had been turned into a mare by magicians: her distracted husband, driven at length to despair, in finding that, day after day, she would eat neither man's food nor that of horses, neither bread nor hay; at last, throwing a halter over her head, led her into the wilderness, there to implore the aid of the blessed Macarius. 'Why have you brought this mare to us,' said the attendants of the holy man; 'what ails the creature?' 'Alas!' exclaimed the husband, 'what you behold is in fact my miserable wife!' Macarius however soon dissolves the charm, which, it appeared, had affected, not the lady, but only the *eyes* of those who looked upon her. By the plentiful use of holy water, all was instantly set right, and the happy pair returned to their home, filled with pious gratitude! Such things, belonging to the tenth century, may well be left where they are found; but belonging to the *fourth*, they carry a lesson, which it is now dangerous not to learn. This same saint, by others of his biographers, is affirmed to have eaten once in the week only and rarely to have slept. Our author refers to the report of his having raised the dead, in attestation of orthodoxy; and the story we find given by another contemporary writer; this, if I have room for it, shall be subjoined, together with other materials of the same sort. The skill and tact of the saint in stripping the demon of his various disguises Palladius illustrates by sundry instances, as also the marvels of his abstinence, his avoidance of things cooked by fire, and his determination to conquer the propensity to sleep; during twenty days and nights continuing abroad, until, as he confessed, unless he had given way, he should have gone mad!

To expiate the sin of having revenged himself upon a gnat, which had gorged itself upon his foot, he condemned himself to sit naked, during six months, upon a marsh; where he suffered all that could be inflicted by hungry myriads of the same species, yet as big as wasps; and on his return to his cell was so disfigured that he could be recognised only by his voice.* What a christian was this! how did 'patience' have 'its perfect work!' and how enlightened a conception of the gospel dispensation must this holy man have entertained! Let the impugners of the nicene church fix their eyes on the blistered back of St. Macarius, and then blush for themselves! which of them would dare to give a similar proof of meekness and piety!

The same saint having practised an innocent fraud upon the great Pachomius, took a place among his monks, pretending to be a novice; whom however he soon amazed by his powers of fasting, and by other feats of the sublime philosophy. During Lent, while some allowed themselves to eat in the evening only, others only once in two days, and others not oftener than once in five; and while some stood through the night, he, betaking himself to a corner, with some moistened palm-branches, (for platting) remained erect until the forty days were completed, neither tasting bread, nor drinking water, nor bending the knee, nor sitting, nor lying down, nor speaking, nor tasting, any thing, except on Sundays, when, to avoid conceit, he chewed some raw leaves. These miracles of constancy threw the entire brotherhood into a ferment; and at length the saint was compelled to confess his name! Macarius frequented several cells, some of these admitted no light; others were so narrow that he could not extend his legs in them; while others were roomy enough to admit his many visitors. The miracles of healing which he performed were too many to be numbered; of which the following may serve as a sufficient sample. On a day while Macarius† was sitting in profitable meditation in his cell, a hyæna came up bringing her cub, which was blind. She knocked at the door with her head—entered while the saint kept his seat, and threw her cub at his feet. The holy man taking it up, spat

* This incident is variously related in different copies.

† This miracle is attributed to the abbot Mark, in some editions of Palladius.

in its eyes, and uttering a prayer, it instantly saw, to the delight of the parent, who forthwith departed; but the next day the grateful beast returned, bringing a sheep's skin of the largest size: what could be more acceptable! but the saint, having a scruple on the subject, and suspecting that the creature might have violated justice, at the instigation of gratitude, said to the hyæna 'Whence couldst thou have got this, if thou hadst not devoured some one's sheep? I cannot accept what thou hast obtained by violence.' The hyæna made signs of contrition; and in the end the saint consented to retain the skin, on the solemn assurance of the generous animal, that she would thenceforward never again injure poor folks by eating their sheep! What can be more edifying than such a story! This very skin, the gift of the grateful hyæna, was bequeathed by Macarius to the great Athanasius.*

Our author is compelled, as he says, to mention the early misdeeds of a certain Moses, in order to set forth, to the more advantage, the wonders of his penitence. This Moses, a robust ethiopian, had been captain of a band of robbers. He however renounced the world, and his former courses. One day it happened to him, as he sat in his cell, to be attacked by four desperadoes, who did not recognise, in the squalid monk, the late gallant brigand. He had not however forgotten his prowess, of which he gave a sufficient proof, by tying the four in a bundle, and throwing them across his shoulder, like a sack of chaff:—the men, thus conveyed into the monastery, were seized with compunction, and professed themselves monks also, nor did they discredit their order, γεγόνασι μοναχοὶ δοκιμώτατοι.

But now, as we are remanded to the nicene divines for spiritual direction, let us see what sort of advice we are likely to receive in particular and urgent instances. The advisers were, in this case, the very men who, by the universal consent of the church, were the best fitted to direct the consciences of the faithful:—at least no better advice could any where be obtained, in that age; and the instance we have to mention is reported, with the warmest com-

* The historian Sozomen, who mentions most of these saints, softens the miracles a little, and omits incidents such as the above. We should indeed suppose them to be interpolations, if the like were not to be found in the undoubted works of the greatest writers of the same age. The latter sentences in the above, do not appear in the Greek.

mendations, by a well-instructed bishop of the same times; nor by him alone; for the grave historians of the church report this, and other similar instances, not merely as undoubted facts, but as the choicest examples of christian wisdom and piety. Sozomen, relating the very same incidents, in his own manner, says of this Moses (lib. vi. c. 29) that he reached the very summit of the monastic philosophy; and this philosophy was by all affirmed to be itself the summit of christian perfection. We must not therefore look for instances more pertinent; and if these are to be rejected, as the fabrications of a later age, we ought, by the same rule of criticism, to rend from the patristic folios at least one-third of their contents. But in truth these narratives are so woven into the tissue of the nicene church system, that it would be a desperate enterprise to remove any considerable portion of them.

This ethiopian Moses, and famous abbot, was, as it seems, of the most robust natural temperament; and supposing his religious impressions to have been genuine, and if there had been among those to whose direction he submitted himself, a single grain, either of common sense or of christian wisdom, he would have received the only counsel his case admitted. 'The Blessed Moses, for by this title,' says the good bishop, 'I must henceforward salute him,' this blessed Moses, or, looking coolly at the facts, this frightful moor, was a victim of the sinful motions of the flesh to a degree coming little short of frenzy; and although, as the historian Sozomen affirms, he had become a terror to all the devils (no wonder) ἐξαίσιον δὲ φόβον τοῖς δαίμοσιν ἐμποιήσας, yet they had their ample revenge; nor did they allow him any rest night or day, until there was nothing left of him, but a mere skeleton.—'You must fairly starve the demon out,' said his spiritual adviser, the great Isidore—ὁ τῆς πορνείας δαίμων. Why did not Paul give this advice in a similar supposed case? The regimen of Moses consisted in working hard, eating nothing but twelve ounces of dry bread in the day, and in repeating fifty prayers every day; or, as the phrase might be colloquially rendered, '*getting through with* fifty prayers!' All this however proved insufficient; he was still tormented beyond measure, and having recourse to another adviser, he adopted the practice (or professed to do so) in which he persisted six years, of standing erect the

night through, in his cell—praying without intermission, nor suffering his eyes to close. Yet even this discipline failed of its intention; for, as our author says, Τῶ ὄντι γὰρ ἀληθῶς ἀκόλαστος ἐπιθυμία. In the end the demon, when no longer resisted, but treated with neglect, even as we disregard wintry flies, gave way, and this 'great saint' enjoyed repose to the end of his days.

The *fifty* prayers, per diem, of Moses, was but a moderate task, for a certain virgin is commemorated who, beside that she abstained from all food except on two days of the week—Saturday and Sunday,* made seventy prayers, and three hundred were achieved by some. In accomplishing this heavy dole of liturgical task-work, three hundred pebbles were used, one being thrown away at the completion of each prayer. Making a direct reference to these pre-eminent saints of the wilderness, Augustine says that, 'to those who, like the solitaries, have reached the highest possible stage of christian perfection, and in whom faith, hope, and charity are complete, *the Scriptures are not necessary*, except for the purpose of instructing others.' 'Itaque multi per hæc tria etiam in solitudine sine codicibus vivunt.'† Let us then distinctly regard this case.—The monks were repeatedly assured by the very highest authorities in the church, that they had reached so lofty a range of christian sanctity, that scriptural instruction, as a means of personal edification, they might safely disregard. We then look into the choicest recesses of this holy solitude; and do we find there scriptural piety? No such thing; but in the place of it folly, absurdity, credulity, formality, hypocrisy, and often the grossest enormities! We confidently say then that the nicene church was not pre-eminently holy, for the species of holiness which it applauded in so emphatic a manner, sprung from other principles than those of evangelic piety; and it expressed itself in modes of conduct and habits of life, directly at variance with apostolic precepts, as well as repugnant to every dictate of reason.

* The custom of paying regard, as well to the sabbath, as to the Lord's-day, continued long in the church. Both days were *festivals*, and fasting therefore inappropriate. The more severe ascetics, if we are to credit them, abstained *entirely* from food during the interval between the close of one festival and the commencement of the other. The fact, if it be a fact, of an abstinence so extreme, and of its consisting with longevity, is highly curious, physiologically.

† De Doctrina Christiana, lib. i. c. 36.

Some pages of the Lausiac history are occupied with the sayings and marvellous exploits of that faultless pattern of sanctity—Saint Antony. I shall take care to avoid repeating any thing which I may have already adduced relative to this extraordinary personage; but as he here crosses our path, we must render him a passing homage. Among my readers there are those who, while sincerely desirous of reaching the truth, yet earnestly wish to think as they have been used to do concerning antiquity. Now I ask such persons, with all seriousness, to follow out, for themselves, this ONE CRITICAL INSTANCE, and to consider its whole import, as affecting the pending controversy. I will sketch the outline of the facts.—

Whatever doubts may attach to particular treatises, or to single passages, in the extant nicene literature, it will be impracticable, unless we mean to sweep away the whole, to call in question the general narrative of St. Antony's religious course. There is at once a breadth and a particularity in the evidence, indubitably bespeaking truth. Almost every writer, contemporary and nearly so, mentions this hero of the wilderness: several of them, and those the most trustworthy, give us a more or less elaborate portrait of him; and the concurrent testimony presents a moral harmony, and an individuality, which fiction could never have reached. The individual character, and the exploits of Alexander the Great, are not so well attested as are the character and exploits of Antony the Great; for we derive our knowledge of the former from later writers, chiefly; of the latter, from his companions, disciples, and contemporary admirers.

Now every writer of the nicene age, who mentions this saint, speaks of him in terms of unmeasured admiration.* If you had put to any one of them the question—Where shall we find the christian character embodied, in all its richness, and sublimity, and perfection, each would have replied by pointing to—Saint Antony! he was called the 'perfectly holy man'—'the angel upon earth'—'the pattern of the angelic philosophy'—'the faultless disciple of Christ.' If any passage exists expressive of a doubt as to the genuineness of St. Antony's piety, I must acknowledge my ignorance of it.

* Some citations to this effect, will be found in the Supplement.

We may be very sure that so much encomium, and an admiration so unanimous, and so impassioned, must have been sustained by some eminent qualities in the subject of it. This might be certainly inferred, and indeed the reader of the original evidence at once perceives that he is introduced to the acquaintance of an extraordinary man. There is a condensed energy, a harmony of intention, an elevation of sentiment, and a lofty style of personal behaviour, which inspire respect. Those who might wish to rid themselves of this inconvenient instance, by silently smiling St. Antony off the stage, indicate, if they have themselves looked into the evidence, either a strange want of moral perception, and a want of dramatic feeling; or else, a desperate alarm, prompting them to have recourse to a pitiful affectation. As to any who will profess thoroughly to admire this saint, as a *christian*, I have nothing to say to them.

St. Antony had reached his seventh year, at the time of the martyrdom of Cyprian; and he lived through the palmy period of the nicene era; being the contemporary of the great men who imparted to it the character of their minds; and to some of whom he was personally known. Nothing is wanting which might fit him to stand as the authorized exemplar of the christianity of that age.

And what sort of christianity was it? Let the candid and honest reader take the pains to peruse for himself every sentence, concerning this saint, which antiquity has handed down to us; and then acknowledge that we may find far more of evangelic doctrine, a better digested theology, and a better temper, as well as much less of extravagance and folly, in the romish saints of the middle and later ages, than in St. Antony, the pattern-saint of the nicene age. If any have deserved the appellation—fanatic (the *malignant* meaning of the term excepted) or, let us say—wild enthusiast, this saint deserved it. I heartily wish that the life attributed to Athanasius were, without retrenchment, given to the english public. It is but some morsels of his history that we are presented with by Palladius; and yet enough to show that an ascetic mysticism, inflamed by a frenzied imagination, was the spring of his religious life, exclusively of any principles that can properly be called christian. St. Antony, let us allow it, was pre-eminently holy, *in the sooffee sense of the word*; but neither

his sentiments, nor his behaviour, find any counterpart, or any warrant, in the Christian Scriptures.

Palladius introduces our hero incidentally only; his report therefore is, in an historic sense, the more conclusive; and these glimpses perfectly agree with all other parts of the evidence. A certain honest farmer, named Paul, having had great reason to complain of the conduct of his wife, rushed from his violated home, with the oath of the age on his lips;* 'gravely smiling' he exclaimed 'Μὰ τὸν Ἰησοῦν, I have done with you;' and he forthwith resorted to the wilderness. Many instances, similar to this, are recorded; nor are we at all inclined to pronounce a severe censure upon such a course, the circumstances and sentiments of the age being considered. Paul reaches the cell of the famous anchoret, and there professes his determination, although he was then in his sixtieth year, to become a monk. St. Antony discourages this proposal, stating it to be impossible that one so far advanced in life should learn to endure the severities of the ascetic discipline—'he might indeed betake himself to a monastery, where he would meet more indulgence; but as to the anchoretic course, it was out of his reach. 'Here am I, living alone, and eating only at the end of five days; and then after a famished fashion.' So saying, the saint shut the door of his cell in the face of the applicant; not going out again during the three following days. On the fourth day, when issuing, he beheld the pertinacious Paul, where he had left him. 'Begone, old man; why do you trouble me thus; I say you cannot remain here.' He protested however that he would die on the spot, rather than depart, and the 'great Antony,' fearing that this might actually happen to one unaccustomed to such abstinence, and that the circumstance might bring upon himself some disgrace (or defilement) καὶ κηλιδώσῃ μου τὴν ψυχήν, admitted him to his cell. To make proof of his constancy, his spiritual master set him to basket-making, still dinnerless as he was; and after he had laboured during several hours, found fault with the work, and commanded him to take it to pieces, and commence anew: this he did without either murmuring, or asking

* Salvian gives us the formula of the western church, 'per Christum.' The μὰ τὸν Ἰησοῦν, had come in the place of the customary μὰ τὸν Δία—'by Jupiter.'

for a crust: the initiation in the severities of the wilderness was continued several days, when at length this humane and enlightened instructor in christian holiness, said—'Shall we eat a morsel of bread?' 'Just as you please, father,' replied the famished novitiate. The table was spread with some ounces of dry bread. Antony prays, and sings psalms, followed by his disciple;—but no morsel for him! 'Wait until sun-set'—yet no supper! At midnight he was called up to prayers, and in alternate dozing, singing, praying, and looking at the table, spent another day; when at length a mouthful was granted. 'Eat another bit, Paul.' 'If you do, I will,' replied the constant Paul.' 'Nay, I am a hermit, and am satisfied.' 'And I would be one.' The two therefore arose, said twelve prayers, and sung twelve psalms, and took a nap!

Many other trials of temper, fortitude, and humility, are related, until at length the master, being satisfied with his scholar, and perceiving that he might make a perfect christian of him, conferred the spiritual knighthood in terms which it would be painful to repeat in connexion with so revolting a farce: in truth, nothing can be more difficult, in making a faithful report of the sayings and behaviour of the heroes of nicene sanctity, than to keep clear, on the one hand of obscenities, and on the other of blasphemous impieties. A full and explicit statement of the facts is forbidden, alike by decency and religion; and I can only urge the doubting, or the incredulous reader to peruse the book now before me, throughout; and, at the same time, to satisfy himself as to the antiquity and genuineness of the document, by tracing all the principal facts through the works of the contemporary writers.

Paul the Simple, ἄπλαστος, for such was now his appellation, rigorously secluded himself in his cell, under the direction of his master, that he might, in solitude, 'make proof of the power of the demons.' A year's discipline, and severe exercise, gave him such a control over evil spirits, and 'all kinds of diseases,' that he equalled or surpassed the most noted of the ascetics, in the richness and freedom of his miraculous energy: miracles in his hand became no miracles; for they were every-day occurrences. On a day, a youth, vexed by a demon of 'high rank'—a 'prince

of demons,' was brought to the great Antony; who, in fact, flinched from the encounter, confessing that, against spirits of this class, he had no commission. The hard case was therefore made over to Paul, the Simple, to whom Antony excused himself, on the plea of urgent business; and then leaving the youth in the hands of his friend, he made off to his cell.

The 'guileless old man'—Paul, having earnestly prayed, turns to the demon whom he provokingly challenges, and whom he commands, in the name of the Father Antony, to come forth. 'No such thing, foolish, gluttonous old man,' replied the devil:—the saint and the demon then went to it furiously with blows and foul speeches on both sides. 'Go out, go out, or I will away, and tell Christ; and then woe to thee, μὰ τὸν Ἰησοῦν, I will instantly go; and woe betide thee then!' The saint had already uttered the most tremendous imprecations without the least effect, and was (or shammed to be) enraged beyond measure. It was then high noon, and the sun was beaming down with an intensity like that of Nebuchadnezzar's furnace: the saint, regardless of its scorching energy, places himself erect on a rock, like a statue, and there adjuring Christ in awful terms, vowed he would neither descend from the rock, nor eat, nor drink, even although he should die, until his prayer should be granted, and the demon be expelled. While yet, says the historian, 'the simple and lowly Paul,' was thus speaking to Jesus, and even before he had finished his prayer, the demon, from the cell, exclaimed 'I go, I go, I yield to tyrannic force: I will return no more: the simplicity and lowliness of Paul have compelled me to give in: yet I know not whither to betake myself.' Instantly the demon departed, and being transformed into a prodigious serpent, of seventy cubits length, he slid away into the Red Sea! 'Such,' adds the historian, 'such are the miracles of the Simple; and yet greater than these did he perform!'

The reader may think himself insulted by the production of this insufferable stuff, of which, in truth, it is an extreme humiliation to be even the reporter. Ten years ago no writer, respecting himself and his readers, would have stooped to the task of gathering materials from these pools of impiety and impurity. But strange things have come upon us; and extraordinary means must

be resorted to for warding off evils which, very lately, it would have seemed chimerical to anticipate as possible. The most repulsive articles of the ancient demonolatry are now propounded to the religious veneration of Protestant England; and that too under a disguise more discreditable to those who employ it, than would have been the naked absurdities it poorly conceals.

What means the 'Ecclesiastical Almanac,' and what mean the notes to it? To this subject (no trivial one) I shall feel it my duty to advert, in a particular and careful manner; and shall then endeavour to furnish some 'Notes upon the Notes,' which, although they will be published 'without authority,' will have been drawn from 'authentic sources;' and not only so; but the evidence shall be produced in its original terms. Lest I should be misunderstood on this subject, by either friends or foes, I will at once, and boldly express the conviction—a serious and religious conviction, that the Church owes it to herself, and owes it to the mind and intention of the Reformers, TO PURGE HER CALENDAR; and the sooner this is done the better.—Just as one should say that certain grotesque and obscene carvings, the relics of monkish times, might, without any damage to holy places, be now defaced and removed. And certainly such a clearance would be still more desirable if it should happen that persons in high places, more devout than wise, and so addicted to antiquity as to have forgotten all modern proprieties, should go about to illustrate their zeal by discoursing concerning the moral purport, and spiritual meaning of these ugly sculptures; and thus draw the eye of the people toward objects that are the most honoured when the least looked at, or thought of.

A perusal of the Notes to the Ecclesiastical Almanac, comparing *what is put forward* in those notes, with *what is held back*, and a consideration of the historic import of sundry expressions, in which simple readers would see no harm, convinces me that, to adduce some samples of the ancient demonolatrous documents, has now become indispensable.

But let us clearly understand in what manner the facts now in view affect our argument. The case then is this; which I will set forth as distinctly as I can, and for each of the following averments, I bespeak the reader's particular attention.

Instances far more gross and impious than the one above adduced, and which I am prohibited from reporting, are to be found in Jerome, in Palladius, in Theodoret, in Cassian, in Macarius, in Socrates, Sozomen, and Evagrius; and these, more or less distinctly alluded to, and vouched for, by the greatest men of the age;—by Ambrose, Augustine, Chrysostom, the Gregories, and others. Nothing therefore would be gained by excepting against certain pages, let us say of the Lausiac History, or of Theodoret's Historia Religiosa, as interpolations of the monks, in the middle ages. Things of the very same quality, and equally revolting, are intimately blended with the unquestioned writings of the Fathers above named. In an after part of my present argument I shall adduce instances which admit of no evasion.

In the next place it is particularly to be observed that, in the nicene age, the profession of miraculous powers was advanced by none but the ascetics and monks; or if there be exceptions, they are few and inconsiderable. At the same time, and this is a leading circumstance in the case, the church, with emphatic unanimity, pointed to the ascetic and monastic body, as its glory, and as comprising whatever was most christian and heavenly. The ancient church formally pledged its own credit upon the credit of the ascetics. Nothing therefore is wanting which might make this case a determinative one.

We then say—The alleged miracles were real, or they were unreal; and they were such as these.—In many instances, by the application of the relics of a martyr, or by the invocation of their names, or by the sign of the cross, or by other equally efficacious and scriptural means, the dead stood erect; and sometimes described, to the amazed crowd, the secrets of the invisible world: sometimes they decided a debate in favour of orthodoxy; and in one such instance, a holy man, sailing up the Nile with a party of his friends and opponents, to a spot where the ancient sepulchral caverns abut upon the river, he called forth one who, according to his own account, had lived in the remotest times of Egyptian history. This awful arbitrator of theological differences, after having given his decisive suffrage in favour of catholic principles, obediently returned to his mummy, or chrysalis state, at the word of the saint, who bade him rest there until the general resurrection!

A volume might be filled with stories of this quality, and many of them are reported, and attested by two or more writers of credit.

Now if these things are allowed to be sacred verities, then, inasmuch as they are the exclusive property of the monks, they must be held to furnish a direct, or at least a sufficiently distinct, divine attestation of the excellence of the ascetic institution. If these were real miracles, then was God with the monks, in a very especial manner, giving them a sanction as decisive as that which had ever been given to prophets and apostles. While we listen to Paul the apostle, how can we refuse to listen to Paul the hermit? But further, if indeed God gave his testimony, in this conclusive manner, to the ancient ascetic institute, in what position stands the English Episcopal Church, which has rejected that institute?

Again; if the nicene miracles are assented to as real, then there can be no pretext for rejecting those alleged by the church of Rome, as having been wrought by her own monks and doctors in later times. I will affirm that the miracles performed by St. Bernard for promoting the crusades against heretics on the one hand, and against Saracens on the other, and which were the immediate instigating causes of the shedding of rivers of blood—these miracles are *better attested* than are any of those reported by the great writers of the fourth century. Let any one show cause, on historical grounds, why we should assent, in the one case, and dissent in the other.

But we now look to the alternative, and assume that the stupendous miracles of the nicene monks were not real.—That they were *pretended* to be wrought, is a fact established by abundant evidence.

That this is indeed what we are bound to assume, appears from such obvious considerations as the following.—

I. These narratives bear upon the face of them, every revolting characteristic of blasphemous arrogance, and of knavish contrivance: they were many of them wrought for nefarious purposes, or on the most ludicrously trivial occasions; and more than a few are mingled with loathsome impurities.*

* I cannot believe that the temerity of my critics should reach the height of daring me to cite the instances. They know well that the nicene dealers

II. They are either not attested by any but the monks; or the witnesses were so disposed as to deprive their testimony of all historic value.

There is however another consideration to which I think more importance should be attached then even to the preceding; and it is this.—

III. Although it were granted, as abstractedly probable, that miraculous powers, in apostolic plenitude, were continued to the church, and moreover that to the ascetics this supernatural agency was entrusted, it must surely be supposed that it would be exercised in connexion with APOSTOLIC TRUTH! Upon how melancholy a conclusion are we thrown, if so much as this may not be confidently assumed, or if we must believe miracles to have been wrought in attestation of fatal errors. But now, in a careful perusal of the ascetic biographies—the one now before us, and all others of the fourth and fifth centuries, we do not find so much as a page, a paragraph, a sentence, clearly embodying evangelic doctrines or sentiments. Nothing better than the very darkest popish doctrine any where appears in these memoirs. A savage pharisaism is what characterises the wonder-workers; or if this fierce temper be softened at all, it is by an abject and inane humiliation—without humility. These workers of miracles, when irritated, were used to pour forth execrations, and roundly to swear 'by Christ,' in a style that resembles nothing so much as the language of a fish market.† As to the pure and holy doctrine of the apostolic epistles—as to the doctrine recovered by the Reformers—as to the doctrine expressed with serious energy in the articles and homilies of the English Church, not a gleam of it appears in these ascetic documents;—or if a few phrases of this quality might be gleaned, the meaning they would bear is directly contradicted by the tenor of the context. No such doctrines as

with the devil sometimes put work into his hands which, as we may well suppose, a fallen angel would have blushed to be concerned with: how must holy angels have blushed to perform the services sometimes required of them by the monks!

† It may amaze some readers to find Salvian affirming the universality of the impious practice of swearing by Christ, in the fifth century. But how can we wonder at this, when the people had been long used to hear *monks* and *hermits* uttering these profanities, as often as they were out of temper? The *μὰ τὸν Ἰησοῦν* is at least a hundred years more ancient than the 'per Christum,' reported by Salvian.

we now consider to be fundamental, and of the essence of the gospel, were professed, or, as it appears, were even known to the ascetic wonder-workers. These hermits who raised the dead at pleasure, never, *never* mention intelligibly, justification by faith, or any kindred doctrine!

Here then is our case. The nicene miracles are of a kind which shocks every sentiment of gravity, of decency, and of piety:—in their obvious features they are childish, horrid, blasphemous, and foul.

They were wrought by a class of men who show themselves to have been utterly ignorant of God's righteousness, and to have spent their lives in the endeavour to establish their own righteousness. But these same miracles are formally assented to by the nicene divines, and by the church authorities on all sides.

The class of persons exclusively performing them is set forth by the nicene church as the élite of the church itself, and as the patterns of perfection, in doctrine, and in temper, and in modes of behaviour. With these men the church itself is compromised, and with these and with their reputation, it must stand or fall. Then, to guard us from all mistake, the apostolic writings contain predictions of an approaching and general corruption of the christian system: these predictions include some special characteristics, and each of these is a mark of the ascetic institute, and all are realized within its discipline: moreover it is said that, in the times of this corruption, the minds of men should be occupied with fables, and that cunning deceits and 'lying wonders' should seduce almost all.

It remains for us then, as religious men, to make our choice between the alternatives.—

The nicene miracles were true, or they were false:—if true, romanism also is true; for it is accredited by better miracles: if false, the nicene church was apostate, and the attempt to re-instate its principles must prove the ruin of any church that favours it; and must involve it in the downfall of the papacy.

We must return for a moment to our document. To pretend to miraculous power is no trivial matter. Those who do so quickly make it evident that they have been abandoned to delusion. So it is in the instance before us. Incredible infatuation

marks every step of our path when we are walking among men who had renounced and forgotten the elevating principles of the gospel.

What the consequences are of following 'the holier and the better state,' should be candidly stated by the learned men who are now recommending it. Shall we lift the veil? Will my critics do it?—they would, if Truth were their object. The tale now before me I leave where it stands, citing only a single sentence. A holy man, much tormented, had had to do with the demon under a seductive guise (a common occurrence with the ascetics); indignant at the trick, he gave the phantom a smart cuff; 'and believe me,' said he to the reporter, 'believe me, I could not endure my own hand during two years afterwards, such was the stench it had contracted from the blow.' Let it here be observed that, although more than a few foolish or superstitious incidents may stand connected with the venerable names of the great men of the sixteenth century, such things are but spots on a bright surface; but when we turn to the very élite of the nicene church, nearly the whole is of this quality; nor is the mass of folly redeemed by any genuine christian elements.

I have been vehemently reproved for having affirmed that, in the nicene age, the monks and clergy were allowed a dangerous familiarity with the female recluses. What are the facts? In many instances, as is mentioned by almost every writer of the times, opulent men, in the prime of life, built convents, defrayed the expenses of them, and therein having collected three or four hundred women, themselves assumed the personal management of the establishment! It is to be observed that, although, in perusing these histories, we may hold ourselves free to question the reality of dreams, visions, and miracles, the statements of the writers concerning obvious and common facts, cannot be otherwise than nearly true. If no such practice had prevailed as the one here mentioned, Palladius could not have spoken of it incidentally, as an ordinary thing.

He relates, for example, the history of a certain wealthy ascetic, named Elias, then between *thirty and forty* years of age, and who was φιλοπάρθενος, and singularly disposed to take care of, and provide for, 'the weaker vessel.' With the view of giving effect, in a munificent manner, to this devout inclination, he built, at his

own cost, a spacious monastery, furnished with every accommodation—with gardens, oratories, and the like; and into this home of piety he collected all the roaming damsels, ἀλωμένας, he could find, to the number of three hundred, and to whom he afforded every solace, πᾶσαν ἀναπαυσιν. But these ladies, like those of whom Augustine complains so heavily, found it a hard thing, and more in fact than they could effect, to keep the peace among themselves; and from another narrative within a few pages of this, we gather that the nuns often proceeded to blows. The good man therefore was called upon to interpose his authority. This personal superintendence he found however to be attended with inconveniences . . .—Then come in three angels, and we mortals shall do well to retire, and the sooner the better! . . . One is inclined often in reading these books to throw them into the fire; but our task must be gone through with.—The grave teachers of youth in our colleges are, at this moment, recommending practices of which the natural and uniform consequences are to be learned from these very books!

Let it be supposed that this same Elias was nothing worse than a sincere fool; but were there not others who were *no fools*, and who, following his example to a certain extent, would follow it no further than might suit their tastes? Nothing but the deepest infatuation could have induced the bishops of the age to sanction such things. What infatuation is that of the modern admirers of such men!

From several of these stories it appears to have been the practice to put in irons any who refused to communicate; sometimes this was done on the pretext of demoniacal possession; but in other cases merely on the ground of alleged errors of doctrine (cap. 32 of Hervetus, p. 81 of Meursius). It appears to have been not unusual, in those times, to sham madness, or idiotcy, 'for Christ's sake.' The ecclesiastical historians report several instances with applause; and so our author. One of this kind is not only characteristic but affecting. Amid shocking disorders there were not wanting instances of meek endurance and purity, which it is a consolation to think of.

There are traces also, in some of these memoirs, of shrewd good sense, and knowledge of human nature. Father John

indicates these qualities; he was moreover a great prophet, and in listening to our author's report of his conversation with those who resorted to him for spiritual advice, one expects every moment to hear some christian sentiment:—not a word of the sort occurs:—a few texts are cited; but they are not those which convey the doctrine characteristic of the gospel. Various examples of the fall and repentance of monks are related; but not one of these conversions seems to have turned upon evangelic motives. Here are men, fed daily or weekly by angels, men ridding the country of wild beasts, and the river of crocodiles, by the name of Christ; but none of them knowing the virtue of that name to liberate the soul from the power of sin, and the fear of punishment. Sad is the monotony of these memoirs:—prophecy, miracle, angelic intercourse, three ounces of bread for the day;—but no Christianity; and these things put together by a christian bishop, the friend and disciple of the greatest divine of the age!

If our immediate purpose permitted, we might be inclined to dwell awhile upon one of the longest of these memoirs; that of Father Apollo. It is as fair a specimen as perhaps can be produced of the ascetic piety. No doubt there was a lofty fervour attaching to these men, in some cases, and we may well imagine that such, drawing around themselves admirers of kindred temper, might, with their companions, offer to the eye an imposing spectacle. But we look among them in vain for the temper that distinguishes the apostolic writings. And what does all this fervour end in? what are its fruits?—the amazing power or spiritual dexterity of the abbot, and of some of the brethren, in catching, charming, and killing enormous snakes! This particular physical adroitness has, through a long course of ages, attached to the people of Egypt; and the christianity of the monks took up, and glorified the ancient sorcerer's craft, which thenceforward recommended itself as a triumphing over the devil—the old serpent. If on one of these pages miraculous interpositions are recorded which one might almost consent to listen to, on the next the quack, or the sorcerer, steps forward, and with just as many texts on his lips, chastises our momentary credulity. A holy man, not finding a boat when there was urgent occasion for crossing the Nile, calls a crocodile, and

with a brother presbyter, is carried over, on his back. Another, being ashamed to strip in presence of his companion, when a river was to be forded, an angel, for the encouragement of his pudicity, descends in haste from heaven, and bears him over dry! This is very seriously related, as well by Sozomen, as Palladius.—Miracle! miracle! miracle! from page to page. If the eye is attracted by the words, 'such was the grace of God bestowed upon his servants,' what do we find in the context? a beating the devil black and blue with a red hot iron bar! miracles, and raw herbs; miracles, and dirty sheep-skin cloaks; miracles, and a filthy condition of the soul, confessed; miracles, wrought freely by men whose virtue consisted in standing erect, night and day, year after year (or who pretended to do so). Put a few christian phrases into the lips of any fakir of India, and you would make an illustrious christian of him, according to the nicene idea of christian perfection.

Is all this filth, folly, knavery, is it indeed christianity? Yet it was so in the opinion of every one of the great writers of antiquity. And here a circumstance attaching to the Lausiac history should be particularly noted. No just exception, in fact, stands against the genuineness of the work; but if it were called in question, the book contains an internal, though unobtrusive evidence which alone might safely be relied upon; and it is this. —Palladius, as we have said, was personally acquainted with the great men of his times; and as might have been expected, he incidentally mentions several of them, particularly Jerome, Rufinus, Gregory Naz., Ephraem, and Basil; and besides that these allusions accord with facts otherwise ascertained, especially in the instance of Jerome, who was the author's enemy, they are the very reverse of what we should certainly have found in a spurious work. A writer of a later age, compiling these memoirs, with the declared design of recommending the ascetic life, if he had introduced the noted men of the fourth century at all, would not have let them go very soon;—he would have made the most he could of their high authority, in favour of the angelic discipline. He might have done this with perfect safety, inasmuch as the authentic writings of these divines would not have contradicted any thing of the sort he might have chosen to invent.

But instead of any such amplifications, a few simple paragraphs contain all that we hear from Palladius of the 'great lights' of the nicene church. Now the reasons of this brevity are obvious and natural. In the first place, although a forger would not have been restrained by any such motive, it would have been strange if the real Palladius had filled his collection with the acts and sayings of his living and universally known friends:—the time was not yet come for writing *their* lives. But in the second place, and this we should especially observe, the sort of material which the author was in quest of, *was not furnished* by the conversation and manners of these great men. It was not *these*, that is to say, it was not any men of sense and education, that raised the dead, or rode on crocodiles, or fought the devil, hand to hand: it was not *these* who professed to fast, absolutely, five or seven days, or who never laid down to sleep, or who abstained from food cooked by fire. These eminent persons were indeed superstitious enough, and their writings indicate their fondness for the marvellous; but, whatever may have been their credulity (and that of Jerome, Augustine, and Ambrose was excessive) they yet, for the most part, respected common sense and decency, in their personal behaviour. *They*, therefore, were not the saints whom Palladius was in search of. All this is perfectly consistent, and it leaves us in undoubted possession of the Lausiac history, as a genuine record of the highest style of nicene christianity.

But although Chrysostom, and Gregory, and Basil, were themselves only third or fourth-rate christians, according to the standard of the age, they gave their unenvious suffrage to those who made higher pretensions. Chrysostom does this on many occasions; and so Basil, not only by the tenor of his ascetic writings, but by the personal patronage he afforded to several heroes of the wilderness. We may take the following, as a sample of what, in the view of this learned, eloquent, and devout bishop, was the climax of christian sanctity. The substance of the memoir before me is this.—

The presbyter Philoromus, of Galatia, was a man of the most exalted piety, and eminent in all kinds of religious exercise, and austerity: and although born of a bond woman, he was justly accounted to have reached the loftiest rank of angelic perfection.

It was in the time of that 'execrable prince,' Julian, that he devoted himself to a religious life; from whom indeed he had received unworthy treatment. His severer trials were however of another kind, and they arose from the vehement inclinations of the flesh: against these internal enemies he carried on a determined warfare, by such means as the following—the wearing iron (girdles)—seclusion (in a cell)—the avoidance of flesh, and of wheat bread, and of every thing cooked by fire, in which course of discipline he persevered until he might profess to have triumphed over every unruly affection. During forty years' exercise in a monastery, was he wrestling with the class of evil spirits the most troublesome to holy recluses. 'During thirty-two years,' said the presbyter to our author, 'I touched no fruit.' During six years, he had shut himself up in a tomb!

The 'blessed Basil,' took particular care of this celebrated man, with whose austerities he was greatly pleased; as well as with his constancy and diligence, continued to his eightieth year. Toward the close of his career, Philoromus made this profession, to his own credit—From the day that he was initiated and regenerated by water and the Spirit, even to this day, he had eaten no man's bread, but had provided for his wants with his own hands, by God's help, and had distributed large sums in charity. On foot he had visited the shrine of St. Mark, at Alexandria (of St. Peter and St. Paul at Rome) and the holy places at Jerusalem, at each assiduously performing his devotions, and all this at his own cost.* 'And for your edification,' the holy man added, 'I do not remember that my mind has ever turned aside from my God.'

Such is the perfect pattern of the christianity of the fourth century, and warranted by the highest authorities! How far it accords with the only authentic standard, let the reader say. Several instances of female austerity, recorded with unmeasured admiration by our author, are, as might be supposed, of the same character. These female memoirs, however, I do not bring forward†, merely saying that, while they exhibit some examples of

* This is variously stated in the several editions.

† Nothing can more clearly prove, or more strikingly illustrate, the infatuation of the times, than the statements made by our author, when he is

fervour, and of unquestionable sincerity, recommended by munificent labours of charity, and by acts of self-denial, *not one of them* indicates even an imperfect acquaintance with the moving principles of christian holiness. No sentiment distinctively christian, or let us say, evangelic, transpires in any part of these narratives. Even if we could suppose that our author, being himself deficient in christian feeling, had dropped these precious elements out of his memoranda, unconscious of their value, can we believe that, if the bare facts he records were such as he states them to be, there *could* have been any genuine evangelic doctrine in the keeping of men who did such things as these ascetics did? One of them stands all night long, during winter, in a well: another vows never to go under a roof; another, never to close his eyes; another never turns his face toward the west;—another, when urgently intreated to visit a dying sister, at last consents; but as he had vowed never to see any of his relatives, and, in common with others, never to look upon a woman, he, after a long journey, presented himself at the door, and resolutely shutting his eyes, calls to his sister—'Here am I, your brother; look at me;' and then refusing to enter, returns to his wilderness! and all these extravagances, and a hundred of like sort, are the objects of the unbounded admiration of the church, and of its most accomplished teachers and pastors, in that age!

The inter-relationship of the ascetics, and the great divines of the time, appears, on the one side, in the admiration with which the latter speak of the former; and on the other, in the acquaintance which many of the former had made with the writings of the latter. A lady is mentioned by our author, who boasted that she had not, through a long course of years, washed more than the ends of her fingers, and that only when about to receive the communion: never the face, never the feet, nor any other part of the body, although afflicted with many disorders, and enjoined by her physicians to use the bath; nor had she reclined upon a bed. Yet this ascetic lady was familiarly conversant with the theological literature of her own, and of the preceding times. How had she profited by the perusal of them?

eulogizing the *married virgins*, many of them women of high rank, whom he mentions.—Strange mixtures of piety (if we may employ the word) and of mad, extravagance.

The actual number of persons, of both sexes, during this period, who followed the monastic rule, was prodigious. Palladius speaks, in several places, of three, five, or even ten thousand monks, under the superintendence of some celebrated anchoret or abbot. Ten thousand nuns are mentioned as belonging to the religious establishments of one city. Armies were sometimes drafted from the wilderness. The causes of this wide-spread mania were deep and various; but the effect must have been to draw off from society almost all the religiously disposed; and it is easy to imagine what must have been the influence of this drainage upon the moral condition of the mass. As to its effect upon the framework of the political system, it no doubt operated to accelerate the downfal of the empire:—it was a bleeding of the social body to an extent that irrecoverably impaired the principle of life.

But we return to our purpose. Whatever kind of merit it may be which should be claimed in behalf of the persons celebrated by Palladius, and by the other writers of the time, no one surely can turn from a perusal of the New Testament, to these narratives, and profess to think that the same principles and modes of action are embodied in the two. Those things which stand foremost in the latter, either find no place in the former, or are alluded to to be condemned; while, on the other hand, the bright and vivifying truths which illuminate every page of the inspired books, are as absolutely excluded from the ascetic memorials, as if they had never been heard of. Many passages of Scripture are quoted by this writer, and by the ascetics whom he commemorates; but, so far as I remember, not so much as once is any passage from the epistles cited, containing the prominent doctrines of christianity. Or if any single page in this book can be found which resembles, in purport and spirit, the glowing style of the Reformers—let it be produced. Fervour there is; but it is that of blind mystics.

We are free then to draw a peremptory conclusion, so far as this evidence may carry us, that the nicene church was not in fact pre-eminently holy, seeing that the sanctity it boasted of was not *christian* sanctity.

It will be asked, if there are not extant some other collections of religious memoirs, affording better samples of piety.

Scattered through the ecclesiastical literature, there are many single memoirs, or commemorative discourses, to some of which I have already referred; but they are all nearly of the same complexion.* There is extant also one collection, similar to that of Palladius, and of which something should be said in this place. It will be anticipated that I allude to the Philotheus, or Historia Religiosa, attributed to the eminent and judicious Theodoret, bishop of Cyrus. A doubt, and I believe it is little better than a slender surmise, has been advanced, as to the genuineness of this collection: I would therefore make no use of it, as affording conclusive evidence; and would merely say that, inasmuch as it accords entirely with the supposed author's sentiments and modes of thinking, as expressed in his unquestioned writings; and as it is perfectly in harmony with every article of religious biography which has been handed down from the same age, no injury would be done to the reputation, either of Theodoret, or of the church of his times, in attributing it to his pen. Several of the most astounding narratives of this collection are vouched for in this writer's valuable Ecclesiastical History; and the ethical principles on which it turns are elsewhere, in his expositions of Scripture, avowed and defended.

But what sort of a collection is this 'Philotheus?' I shall find room for some samples in the Supplement to this number. An extreme injustice has been done to the legendary compilers of the middle ages, in speaking of them as the *Fathers* of pious fables, or the *inventors* of blasphemous absurdity. These later monks did nothing but what the school-boy does, who scrawls, ten times

* So little has the defection of the ancient church from evangelic principles been understood among protestants, and so erroneous are the notions that have been entertained relative to the quality of the early piety, that, if the commemorative orations of the nicene divines were published *without name or date*, I am persuaded they would, by most readers, be attributed to the tenth or twelfth century. These general assertions will not, I know, satisfy some of my readers; and I feel it will be indispensable to produce *entire*, and with the original, a sample of the pieces referred to. Let protestants consider what they can expect of christian truth from men who had so been abandoned to their own delusions, as constantly to commend their temporal and eternal welfare to the guardianship of the saints in heaven. 'Oh thou (Ephræm) ... remember us, and ask for us the remission of our sins.' Greg. Nys. Did such men understand the gospel? Are such to be our teachers?

over, the sentiment which fills the topmost line on the page of his book. Bring together Jerome, Gregory Nyssen, Palladius, Cassian, and Sulpitius Severus, and you have ample text for all the irreligious nonsense found in the monkish romances. If this is not generally understood, it is time the fact should be put beyond doubt.

It will however be said that the evidence which has been cited or alluded to above, attaches to a rather late period; that is to say, to the century dating onwards from the nicene council; and that we should look higher for our Pattern Church. To this I reply, *first*—

That several of the ascetics, and those whose course of life was the most extravagant, commenced their religious career about the time, or very soon after the time, of the martyrdom of Cyprian:—

Secondly, That it is to this very period that the appeal is made (and necessarily so) for the warrant of church principles; inasmuch as the earlier ecclesiastical records are far from being copious enough to subserve the purpose in view; and—

Thirdly, that, so far as these earlier documents, when coolly and impartially scrutinized, may support any satisfactory conclusion, it must be to this effect, that while, in seasons of suffering, multitudes of christians gave proof of the sincerity of their faith, the christian body at large does not appear to have reached any very exalted stage of purity or piety. Such a conclusion is very nearly made absolute by a cautious analysis of the public acts of the early church, as now extant, in the Canons of Councils, the Constitutions, and the Decretal Epistles, of those times. It will be my business, as part of the reply which I am pledged to give to the objections that have been advanced against the preceding numbers, to offer a full statement of facts, connected with the north african church, in the time of Cyprian. In acquitting myself of this part of my task, I shall avail myself of whatever time has spared in this way,* and be able, I believe, to secure the assent of every ingenuous reader.

* All that we can now hope to find, bearing upon this era, is contained in the incidental allusions of three or four contemporary writers; and in the public documents above referred to. For *these* we have recourse to such works as that of Routh; but especially to the Acta Conciliorum &c. edited in twelve folios, by the Jesuit Hardouin; and printed at Paris 1615.

In equity, an opponent should hold himself bound to furnish positive proof of the eminent, or pre-eminent sanctity of the ancient church, if indeed he intends to insist at all upon *this* ground, in establishing the authority of church principles. On *our* side we need do nothing but wait, until evidence to this effect has been produced. No such evidence can be appealed to, for it does not exist; nor are the admirers of antiquity at liberty to assume the fact, merely because it would aid their argument, if established.

Meantime, appealing from those of my critics from whom I have no hope of obtaining any candid admissions, I will ask for the conscientious verdict of those who, although they may vehemently resent the conclusions I am endeavouring to establish, would yet, as men of honour and piety, instantly give me the benefit of their assent, in any single instance in which the evidence appeared to be irresistible. To such persons I now look, with a respectful request, that, on so serious an occasion, they will answer, as in conscience obliged, and according to the facts. And I further request that, instead of tacitly reserving room for the retention of their present opinion, by professing to distrust the statements advanced in these pages, they will, for themselves, peruse the writers whom I have above referred to, particularly Palladius, Theodoret, (the ascetic memoirs, *passim*) Jerome (his few biographical articles) Cassian, Sulpitius Severus, and the commemorative orations of Gregory Nyssen; and these collated with the evidence of Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, and Evagrius. The labour of such a research would not be great, and the result could not fail to be satisfactory.

Our present question has been, as to the alleged FACT of the pre-eminent christian sanctity of the ancient church. This correlative term implies a comparison; we will institute a comparison therefore, and ask whether the ancient church, so far as we have the means of judging of it, was, in any christian sense, more holy than THE MODERN PROTESTANT CHURCH; and within this term I must be allowed to include persons of ALL COMMUNIONS, holding orthodox (trinitarian) and evangelic doctrine;—all mainly agreeing with the doctrinal articles of the English Episcopal Church.—If we fully believe that the thirty-nine articles comprise a sound

expression of apostolic doctrine, dare we deny those to be christians who cordially assent thereto?

Now, inasmuch as abstract theological treatises afford a very uncertain criterion of the condition of the church whence they may have proceeded, and as a far more vivid and trustworthy species of evidence is to be gathered from contemporaneous biographies of individuals, highly reputed in their times, we will avail ourselves of this means of carrying on a comparison between the church of the fourth century, and the (CATHOLIC) church of the nineteenth. This mode of judging of the two, will at least prove as good for the one, as it is for the other.

At the outset, I will make as large a concession as can be wished for by the admirers of antiquity. That is to say, I will take what, in the judgment of the *ancient* church itself (which we are bound to regard in such an instance) were considered as its brightest examples of excellence; but, in turning to the *modern* church, while I claim the right of excluding the least favourable samples, or such as a splenetic adversary would drag forwards, I am willing to forego whatever advantage might be derived from a few illustrious instances of protestant piety. We will say nothing of the worthies who have been the glory of the evangelic church, during the last, and the present centuries. But we look to the ordinary rate of those christian memoirs with which the press has teemed, during the last few years. Let any man, superior to narrow ecclesiastical prejudices, and blessed with a christian warmth of feeling, look into these middle rate, or average biographies, and gather from them, after he has allowed for the personal partialities of their compilers, an equitable notion of the principles and mode of life of the persons therein described: and let this general idea of protestant piety be brought to the standard of the New Testament.

We make another concession:—we will not drag the illustrious worthies of the ancient church to the bar of the modern church, condemning them if they do not agree with the notions of the latter; but we will carry the latter back to the bar of the former. Let the saints of the calendar stand on their pedestals; and we moderns will walk up to them, and measure ourselves by them. That is to say, we are to take, *seriatim*, each prominent and cha-

racteristic excellence of the ancient sanctity, and see what we have to place by the side of it.

That which stands foremost in the ancient biographies, and that which, *if it be worth any thing*, may justly claim to stand foremost, is the possession of MIRACULOUS POWERS. I will take care not to reiterate what I have already said on this subject; but I cannot allow it to be evaded, or slightly and contemptuously dismissed, in this instance. It offers an experimentum crucis, in the present controversy. Our modern christians, even the most eminent of them, advance no claim of this sort. No dead men have come from their graves to glorify the names that are held in the highest esteem by the protestant church; none whom *we* venerate have crossed rivers on the backs of crocodiles; none such have tamed lions by the sign of the cross; none such have, by the same efficacious means, fixed a troop of brigands, like Lot's wife, to the ground; none of them have boasted that, every week, during a long course of years, an angel has flown direct from heaven, in their sight, with the ration of bread they needed.

Now, if these miracles were *real*, all controversy concerning the ancient church ought instantly to be dropped: dare we compare ourselves with men, who, as they themselves affirmed, wrought more miracles than the apostles? *If these miracles can be proved to have been real*, we give in, without another word.

But what if they were not real? What if they were impious frauds? What if they were the mingled products of knavery and madness? Why then, and in this case, not less than in the former, all controversy ought to be dropped;—in this case, whoever retains a genuine religious sentiment, will cease to say a word in behalf of antiquity, as if we might look to it for examples of christian perfection. Any way therefore, this subject is a determinative one; and unless we can come to a conclusion on this point, it will avail little to advance to another.

Two living individuals, we will suppose, are before us. The one says, 'I can raise the dead; I do it customarily.' The other is only a plain christian man, sound in doctrine, and blameless in life; but he would shudder to make any similar pre-

tension. Now if, after due inquiry, the profession of the first were admitted to be good, then must his companion cede to him every thing like authoritative pre-eminence; but if the reverse were proved, then the pretender at once sinks immeasurably below the level of common christian excellence;—we scout him indignantly as knave or fool.

This is precisely the state of the case, when the great saints of antiquity are placed by the side of simple hearted modern protestant christians. In such a comparison, one of the two must necessarily give ground; but while the modern may retire with his christian integrity unimpaired; if the ancient be found wanting, he goes off, the object of our resentment and disgust.

All sorts of evasions will be resorted to, I well know, for the purpose of escaping from this dilemma; but I am now thinking of those readers only who will scorn to use any evasion. Let such persons then look a little nearer to the case before us; and let it be stated as favourably as possible. It is a fact that, while, during the times of pagan persecution, and which were, as we may suppose, the purer times of the church, we hear very little of miraculous powers, that is to say, *from the writers of those* times; they suddenly break forth in stupendous abundance just at the moment when the ascetic philosophy gets the ascendency, and becomes the object of universal admiration. At the very instant when the ecclesiastical heavens were darkened with swarms of monks, the earth was enlightened by a sudden blaze of miracles!

The question then is, were these things the 'lying wonders,' which we find predicted by the apostles; or were they indeed evidences of 'the finger of God,' attesting the doctrine and discipline of the ascetics? Read the evidence, and give a verdict accordingly.

I am confident that no man whose mind is not already debilitated by abject superstitions, can peruse this evidence, and feel any thing else than a vivid disgust. Let us ask then, and the strange vagaries of some in our own times may enable us to do so with the more effect, what is likely to be the influence, upon the spiritual condition, and moral sentiments, and ordinary behaviour of men, of their advancing *false pretensions* to miraculous powers —pretensions formally made, gloried in, and kept up, through a

long course of years? It is hard to allow that fanatics of this class might, with all the aids of self-delusion, retain any conscience, any probity, or any purity of behaviour. Men who, before the rabble, play off a miracle, the assistants in which must have 'rehearsed' the day before, how are they likely to behave themselves as the superintendants of convents? Can we really go so far in credulity as to think all might yet be holy under such management? For my own part, I could much sooner believe the miracle itself, even the most amazing of those reported, than believe that a knavish wonder-monger would behave himself honourably and purely, when I see, hanging at his girdle, the keys of a convent. What is it that is now demanded of us by the admirers of antiquity?—To believe the monkish miracles? This indeed is very difficult, and perhaps we cannot do so without prostrating our reason;—but if not, are we yet to believe those to have been *holy men* who played the pranks which the ancient church so much admired, and which we are compelled to denounce as impositions? A well defined subject is now before us, and on a single point the comparative merits of the modern protestant church, and the ancient church, are embodied in two characteristic instances. On our part we have taken no pains to *select* our instances; for we are willing to be represented, on this occasion, by a fair, not a rare sample of consistent piety. Here then is our simple hearted modern christian, bible in hand, with a happy well trained family around him: he is no hero; but among those who know him best, he is loved and reverenced; and long after he quits his place on earth, there will be many to bless his memory, and to say, we have lost a friend; although none to seek for the pardon of their sins through his intercession in heaven.

On the other side stands the picked man, whom the nicene church puts forward, as her glory:—he is a raiser of the dead, and the terror of demons. Yet at the first sight of him, as he moves slowly from his cavern, you might doubt whether it be a bear, or a human creature. The hermit has been summoned by a crowd to expel an obstinate spirit (we are now picturing one of the most ordinary scenes of antiquity) and if this scene, just as it usually presented itself, were transferred to the canvass—with

the saint and the demoniac—I believe four spectators out of five would commit a sad blunder in attempting to say which of the two figures before them was the saint, and which was the demoniac.—But the evil spirit submits, and the triumphant champion returns to fast and sing as before!

Let us plainly be told whether, *in relation to miraculous pretensions*, the ancient saint, or the modern protestant christian is probably the apostolic man? Or, to state this single point of our argument in other terms; we ask—should the modern protestant church think itself disadvantaged, in comparison with the ancient church, because it can make no pretensions to the working of SUCH MIRACLES as were wrought, every day, by the ancient church? There can be no necessity for any circumlocution in giving us a reply to so plain a question as this.

I suppose we may with perfect confidence affirm the following to be an absolute Rule; namely—

That, if TRUE MIRACLES afford us a safe guidance when we are in search of a TRUE CHURCH; FALSE MIRACLES furnish *an equally safe criterion*, in rejecting the pretensions of AN APOSTATE CHURCH.

By False miracles, in this place, I mean, not single instances of delusion, or quackery, attaching to individuals, and rejected by the community, and forgotten three days after they are noised; but False miracles, enacted through a long course of years; professed by persons highly reputed in the community; reported and gloried in by the authorities in such a church; and recorded, with all gravity, by reputable historians. Such miracles, for example, as those to which the church of Rome has been used to appeal, and does appeal still, in attestation of her claims. But the miracles recorded by the writers of the fourth century, we suppose, when subjected to rigid examination, on the admitted principles of historical criticism, are found to be, at once wanting in every point of credible evidence, and marked by the broad characteristics of delusion and knavery. We then ask the admirers and restorers of antiquity to show cause why our RULE, reasonable as it is, should not be applied to a church thus proved to have been given over to the belief of lies.

Again putting ourselves under the direction of antiquity,

while we carry on our comparison between the ancient, and the modern model of piety, we look to the second capital article of the sanctity applauded by the former: of course we mean celibacy and virginity. I will gladly, and for ever, have done with this subject, the moment when my opponents shall, in an unambiguous manner, have given me their reply to the two or three questions which I have now to propose.—

Whatever might be the opinion of the *ancient* church on that point, I presume its *modern* admirers would not profess to think of the practice of religious celibacy in any other light than as *a means to an end*, and that end nothing else than genuine purity of heart, and greater usefulness. Is celibacy good in any other sense than this? if not, then we take the case of the ancient ascetics and monks, just *as it is reported by themselves;* not as fancied and painted by modern dreamers; and I must here remind the general reader that *he* is not in possession of this necessary evidence: it rests in books little read; and it is of a kind which can never be spread before modern eyes. But, being such as it is, I ask those who have looked into it, whether they will tell the world that the ancient ascetics (many of the most eminent of them making the most revolting confessions, even in their seventieth or eightieth year) were indeed, and as a class, pure in heart, and in person? Were these men pure as compared, *first*, with spiritually minded and well taught modern christian men, living in matrimony? I would be glad to state this question in any way that shall best elicit a conclusive reply. —I ask then any christian married man, who, without making lofty pretensions, so lives as to have a conscience void of offence, to read the original memorials of monkery, taken from any age, and then to say whether he would change places, *as to purity of the heart, with a monk of the ordinary rate?*

But *secondly*, within the pale of the modern protestant church, there have been more than a few devoted persons of both sexes, who, at the impulse of *personal motives*, have lived unmarried, in 'godly simplicity,' and who, on the very grounds of the apostolic rule, have used their exemption from worldly cares for purposes of christian charity. Such individuals have seemed fully to satisfy the terms of our Lord's rule, as well as that of the

apostle; but no such person, whom I have ever known or heard of, has been used to call himself, or herself, 'an angel,' because unmarried. No such persons have pretended to be more pure than their married friends. No such persons have talked of themselves as standing next to the throne of God—because unmarried. Now, whereas persons of this class manifestly include all who do well to choose a single life, according to the scriptural rule, can we believe the ancient church to have been wise, or to have been divinely guided, in promoting a doctrine and practice which in fact hurried hundreds of thousands of persons into a profession of celibacy, the larger proportion of whom, by *their own confession*, had miserably mistaken their vocation, in this particular, and became, in consequence, the victims of loathsome infirmities, as well as often of infamous vices?

The question then to which I request a distinct answer is to this effect—Whether, *all the facts being considered*, we are at liberty to regard the ancient church as more holy than the modern protestant church, on *the single account* of its doctrine and practice of celibacy?

I have also to ask whether, considering the consequences of this practice, and what it implied, as to the clergy, the whole subject receives any illustration from the third verse of the fourth chapter of the first epistle to Timothy? This question surely admits of a reply in the monosyllable—Yes, or No.

Once more, and still guiding ourselves by the judgment of antiquity, we come to consider that great article of ancient piety —Fasting. It is indeed difficult to determine, according to the opinion of antiquity, which of these elements of christianity, continence or abstinence, should have the precedence. Every writer of the times speaks of this virtue in the highest terms of praise, and, as to the biographies before us, there is nothing in the discipline of the ascetics about which so much is said. And let us understand that this admired article of the celestial philosophy was not an occasional abstinence from ordinary food, such as we hear of in scripture, and which is the utmost that scriptural examples can warrant; but it was a devotion of the whole energies of the life to the business of fasting.—It was no such thing as the writers of the Tracts for the Times speak of, and

wish to make us believe to have been the practice of antiquity. With the ancient church, the degree of abstinence was the measure of sanctity. If a man was holy who never tasted food until sun-set, he who ate only once in two days was holier; and holier still the eminent man who fasted absolutely five days in every week! If he who ate flesh sparingly might pretend to a little sanctity, he who never touched animal food might pretend to more: and as to the prodigy of christian perfection who denied himself whatever had been prepared by fire (the totaller of that day) the pity was that such a hero of the stomach should have been detained on earth at all. If to drink water only was a merit, great was the merit of drinking fetid water! Ask the writers of antiquity to show you, in their opinion, the 'highest style of man.'—'There he stands, and he has supped on raw herbs and ditch water!—Can you produce the like to him from your sensual protestant church?'

No, we cannot; but we can show persons who, while they have carried the practice of *occasional fasting* to as great an extent as can be warranted by scripture, have fully admitted 'every creature of God to be good, and by no means to be refused by them that know the truth,' and who have ordinarily eaten 'such things as were set before them,' with gladness, 'giving God thanks,' and on the strength of the food thus cheerfully taken, have actively served God, and their fellows.

Now again, and on this particular point, my questions are susceptible of categorical replies: and they are these five—

Did our Lord and the apostles intend that *any* christians should devote their lives to the business of fasting, or fast day after day, through the year?

Did our Lord and the apostles indicate, by their example, that an abstinence from animal food, and from things cooked by fire, was an article of sanctity?

Can we believe that men well understanding evangelical principles, and who had been used to hear, from the preachers of the day, a clear doctrine concerning 'God's righteousness,' would have addicted themselves to these extravagances?

Are modern protestant christians, who live temperately, and practise self-denial so far as is recommended by apostolic example,

to be accounted less holy than the ancient monks, *on this one account*, of their inferiority in the art and practice of fasting?

Lastly, and I now make a religious appeal to men of conscience; Are we, or are we not, to consider the enormities of the ancient ascetic practice, in this respect, as pointed at in the verse which I have above referred to? If not, to whom can that verse be made to apply? If we are so to apply it, then what was the church which prostrated itself before the five-day fasters of the monastery?

Lest any doubt should still be entertained as to the *facts* on which these questions turn, I will, in the Supplement, cite the latin and the greek, bearing upon the subject, from the most authentic sources.

Once more, and still yielding ourselves to the direction of the ancient church, we name the next prominent article of the ascetic piety: that is to say, the daily routine of liturgical task-work. We really must not use phrases of a better sound, in speaking of the devotional labours of the ascetics:—the repeating a stated number of prayers, daily and nightly, and the singing so many psalms, and both scrupulously chalked on the score, as if the dealer with Heaven was equally careful, on the one side, not to cheat himself, by a prayer or psalm too many, and on the other not to defraud Heaven, by one too few! Our Lord condemns 'vain repetitions' in prayer, and reprobates the error of supposing that we are 'heard by our much speaking,' and the apostle speaks of those who, in the times to come, should have 'a form of godliness, while they denied the power of it.'

In adhering then to the spirit and the letter of our Lord's words, and those of the apostle, shall we condemn the practice of the ascetics; or, with the ancient church, applaud it?

In the entire compass of the *ancient* ascetic memoirs (I should be far from thus speaking of more modern and romish memoirs) I have not found so much as one clear instance, or indication of that spiritual and intelligent devotion, of which very many bright examples have been furnished by the modern protestant church.

We are not asking now whether the ancient ascetics might not, some of them, have been spiritually minded men. For my own part I verily believe it: but whether, on the whole, and

when we compare ancient devotional habits with those of well taught modern christians, we can give the palm to the former, and declare our conviction, that, in this vital instance—the correspondence of the soul with God, as carried on by vocal prayer and praise, those whom the ancient church speaks of as the most eminent in devotional exercises, have an advantage over fairly chosen instances of protestant piety? The very contrary will be admitted by every ingenuous and well informed reader of the ancient ascetic memoirs: and hence it will follow that, in the very highest exercises of the christian life, those who were reputed to have reached the loftiest excellence, were in fact miserably wanting in whatever a rational piety can approve.

The ascetics had however their merits; and, so far as I have been able to gather the truth from amid the vapid wonder-loving encomiums of their biographers, these merits consisted, first, in a patient abstracted submissiveness, under either the despotic and whimsical government of the abbot, or the self-devised sufferings of the ascetic discipline; and *secondly*, in the charities of the few who, in betaking themselves to a religious life, resigned the whole, or the greater part of their fortunes, to the use of the poor, or to the control of the church.

Let all imaginable importance be attached to these two points of ancient piety. Whatever they may be worth, they comprise every thing—so far as we can judge by the documents before us, of which any reasonable boast could be made:—all the rest was but as 'filthy rags'—the folly and the delusion of men who, in departing from 'the Law and the Testimony,' had lost their hold alike of reason, of honesty, and of genuine piety.

But we now turn the tables, and bring the select saints of antiquity into comparison with our modern protestant worthies—those I mean of average excellence, on ground where the former can make no pretensions whatever to equality. Be it so, that our moderns are poor hands at raising the dead, or dealing with the devil—that they are but indifferent fasters—that a large proportion of them have been married persons, and that few have been used to 'say and sing' a hundred psalms in four-and-twenty hours. But there is another point in the case before us; and if it be not of a determinative kind, where shall we find one that is?

We take in hand, let it be by hazard, any fifty of those biographies, from which the general character of modern christianity, when it has been fairly realized, may be learned. Now a reader of such memoirs, who is capable of putting out of view what may be peculiar to himself, as attached to this or that communion, will gladly recognise, in all of them, certain elements to which nearly equal importance is attributed by all, and which are professed and referred to with a cordial pleasure on every fit occasion.

These modern christians, that is to say, those whom I am intending to embrace in this survey, have explicitly acknowledged Trinitarian doctrine, as expressed in the nicene creed, and therefore, on this ground, they must not be spoken of as inferior to the choicest of the saints of antiquity. All, moreover, have spoken and acted under a serious impression of the comparative insignificance of the interests of time: all have fully admitted the obligation, and the spiritual import of the moral law; or, in other words, have professed themselves to be 'under the law to Christ.' In these respects therefore again, they have at least stood on a level with the anchorets. But there are *other* principles which they have recognised; and the reader will say whether he deems these to be of vital consequence in the christian scheme, and whether a class of persons who, judging by the evidence before us, appear to have been almost entirely unconscious of any such principles, can be allowed to have reached the pinnacle of christian perfection, or ought to be set before us as our patterns.

If, in comparing our modern protestant piety with that of antiquity, in relation to these prime articles, I misrepresent the ascetics, or their admirers, the remedy is at hand. If I speak of certain things as wholly wanting, or as very scarce, which in fact abounded, nothing will be more easy, than to produce, from these ascetic memoirs, or from others, of the *same age*, which I have avoided to mention, or have been ignorant of, page after page of glowing, cordial, and unambiguous evangelic sentiment. It would not be enough, on the part of a critic, to adduce two or three insulated sentences, which may possibly bear a favourable interpretation; for, by the canonical rule, that 'out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,' it may be confidently assumed that, if indeed the hearts of the saints of the ancient church had

been warm with apostolic feeling, their customary language would have shown it; nor could their biographers have failed altogether to report the fact.

In the first place then, it will be granted that, within the modern protestant orthodox and evangelic church, as represented in the diaries, letters, conversations of those whom this church has approved, there is a CATHOLIC CONSENT concerning the evil of sin, the ruin of man's moral nature, and the alienation of the heart from God. Most of the religious memoirs which I have now in view are distinctly characterized by this feature:—I mean, a heartfelt recognition of the lamentable fact, that 'man is very far gone from original righteousness.' These pious persons have seemed to groan, being burdened, by a sense of the turpitude and malignity of the sin that 'dwelleth in us,' and which too often expresses itself in unbelief, hardness of heart, worldly dispositions, and culpable acts.

At a first glance of the ascetic pietism, one should say that this scheme of discipline was founded on an acknowledgment of the danger and evil of sin; and that it was, throughout, a conflict with the enemy in the bosom. But I think an attentive perusal of the remains of ascetic biography will show that there is, in this particular respect, an *appearance only*, of genuine christian sentiments. The mortified ascetic talks of his 'sins,' as if his eye were fixed on a score, which it behoves him to wipe out; but very little of *sin*, in a spiritual sense, as the object of the divine displeasure; and when he speaks of his unhappy condition, in the present state, it is much rather as being subject to the conditions of animal life, than as corrupt, in a moral sense. I think it would be difficult to find, in the collections which I have been citing above, or in any similar pieces of ancient biography, so much as one sentence clearly expressing a genuine compunction, and *grief of the heart*, on account of sin. Some of these saints are recorded to have wept night and day;—but from what precise motive, does not appear. Or, to say the best, it does not so appear as to remove an ominous suspicion concerning the very rudiment of the religious emotions of these persons.

Constantly conjoined, in protestant memoirs, with the expression of pungent sorrow on account of *sin*—and of *sins*—the

evils of the heart, and of the life, is an animated recognition of the influence of the Holy Spirit, as the originator of whatever is good, and as the only source of holy affections, and of true consolation. On this subject our modern christians are not merely orthodox, with Basil; but they are evangelic, with Paul. And here the contrast between the moderns and the ancients is most striking. With the ascetics, and I recollect no single exception, unless a few ambiguous passages in Ephræm may afford an exception, what we find in the room of regeneration by the Spirit is—'holy baptism;' and in the place of the sanctifying agency of the Spirit, in the heart, even the indwelling grace, whence all holy desires proceed, we hear of wonder-working. Of all the saints mentioned by Palladius, not one, that I remember, utters a word indicating a happy consciousness of the work of grace in his heart, leading the soul to delight itself in God, as a holy being. The mystic 'absorption,' is the only resemblance to any such state of mind, which these memoirs offer to our view. I here ask those of my opponents who themselves have any spiritual discernment, to read Palladius, and Theodoret, and any other *ancient* ascetic collection, and to tell the world whether they find there any clear indications, or any that can be relied upon, of the doctrine of the renovating and comforting influences of the Holy Spirit, in the hearts of christians. If not, can we be justified in allowing men to have been *eminently holy*, whatever might be their merits, who knew little or nothing of the only source of true holiness?

Our modern protestant christians have been, with a few exceptions, conversant with the ordinary trials of life, engaged in the discharge of its common duties, and liable to its pains and sorrows. In consequence of this their position amid the cares and fears of real life, and as the direct product of their religious belief, they have left on record very many expressions of their peaceful sense of the Paternal Goodness of their Heavenly Father, in the control of their affairs; even when smarting the most severely under immediate chastisements. How soon might we fill many pages with happy illustrations of this filial sentiment, flowing fresh and copiously from bleeding hearts!—Parents, bereaved of tenderly-loved children; or husbands and wives, weeping, but not resenting the loss of all that was dear to them on

earth! Christians reduced to indigence by sudden calamities; yet not merely exulting in the thought of their treasure in the heavens; but consenting to the divine conduct in such instances!

How grim is what presents itself on the ascetic page, as the counterpart of any such filial sentiments! There is no indication—none that I have met with, showing that these persons enjoyed any happy communion with God, as their Heavenly Father, and as the daily Giver of good, and the wise dispenser of sorrows. Their very rule was to accept as little as possible from God's hand, 'who giveth liberally and upbraideth not'—'who giveth us all things *richly to enjoy*'—their law was, to receive as small a modicum of earthly good as nature would allow. They dealt with God as with a grudging giver; they practically told the Bountiful Creator, that they thought of him as they would of a Gaoler. And as to their crosses and afflictions, these they took entirely into their own hands. How should *they* feel a pious and affectionate resignation, in the endurance of wants and pains, which were all self-imposed? The morose deity feared by the ascetics *was not* the God of Love, whom *christians* worship. Let us vividly imagine the contrast presented by the two cases:—on the one side there is the christian parent, weeping over the coffin of a darling child; and yet not 'charging God foolishly;'—on the other side, the most eminent saint of the ancient church, sullenly shifting the iron girdle he has clenched around his loins; or, half frenzied from the want of food and sleep, yet refusing to lie down: or if you find him at ease, in his cell, looking (do not let me be blamed for saying what *is strictly true*) more like a hog in the mire, than a man. Equitable reader! where is christianity—is it with the modern protestant church, or with the ancient church? Tell us, is it not manifest that the ancient church, in giving its suffrage to *such* 'saints,' indicated its own fatal departure from apostolic doctrine?

If any doubt, as to this alleged fact, might remain, it is at once removed when we look to the bright peculiarity of the christian system.—I need not say the doctrine of a justification, free, full, and absolute, through faith in Christ. On this first principle there is indeed, among modern christians, however they may

otherwise differ, a happy catholic consent, and it is shown in this, that, in the records of their personal feelings—the meditations, the diaries, which they have left in their closets, and in the letters they have exchanged with their christian friends, this subject, very little varied in the mode of expression, is always foremost and uppermost:—this is the theme—this the animation—this the bond—this the well-understood ground of happy communion, among all Christ's followers.—Christ himself, and his sovereign justifying grace;—not the sacraments; not the church; not prayers, psalms, fasts, sheep-skins, cells; none of these things, but the Divine Saviour; himself the hope, and the only hope of his people.

It is a cluster of truths we have here to do with, which, as I affect not the accuracy of the theologian, I do not attempt to distinguish: but plain christian men are not apt to think that they must go to college before they can be qualified to speak of the first article of their faith, and of the ground of all their hopes. But then has the modern protestant church erred in thinking that Christianity, as embodied in the apostolic epistles, contains something more than the orthodoxy expressed in the nicene creed? Yet even so much as this we hear very little of in the ascetic memoirs. The name of the Saviour occurs but seldom in connexion with the christian's hope and joy. Instead of evangelic sentiment, of this sort—instead of the glory and grace of Christ, what is it we find but a medley of folly, impurity, delusion, and imposture! Let those who will resent this allegation, open these ancient memoirs, at hazard, in half a dozen places, and translate and print whatever may come to hand. Or instead of this, let them choose their saint from among those the most highly commended by the nicene divines, and give us the whole which has been handed down concerning him.

Use what test we please, the broad fact will stand before us, that the class of persons whom the ancient church uniformly, and in the most emphatic manner speaks of as having reached the very summit of christian perfection, afford, when we come as near to them as we can, and listen to their converse with their friends and disciples, scarcely any evidence of their cordial recognition of the first elements of christian piety. Certain it is, either that

the ascetics knew nothing of the peculiar glory of the Saviour, or that their admirers, and those who have described them, were themselves unconscious of that glory.

Whatever mystery may hang over the general course of human affairs, as related to the divine government, and to the diffusion of truth, no difficulty attaches, within particular departments of religious history, to the task of tracing the proximate connexions of cause and effect. We may grieve and wonder too, in finding that christianity did not maintain its purity, and diffuse itself over all the world in the early centuries; but as in fact it did not, and as we shall in vain attempt to penetrate those reasons of inscrutable wisdom which have allowed the actual course of events to take place, nothing remains for us but, for our immediate instruction, to lay open the intelligible part of church history; so far at least as may aid us in our own endeavours to hold to the Truth.

All the difficulty which attends this subject arises from the laborious endeavours that have been made to give a fair colour to a false Ecclesiastical Theory. That Theory being abandoned, nothing can be more simple than the history of the religious declension and delusion, the commencements of which are unequivocally indicated in the canonical records of the apostolic age. The very first chapter of church history contains enough to prepare us for what its after chapters are filled with; and enough too to teach us the folly and danger of transferring to men—even the best men, any portion of the reverential regard which is due to God alone, and to his word.

We do not listen to the apostles either because they presided over immaculate societies; or because they, *as men*, were exempt from human frailty; but simply and only because, in their writings, they uttered, not their own mind, but the 'mind of the Spirit.' The more entirely we rest upon this simple principle, the more firm will be our footing: endless perplexities attend any other rule of religious deference. Let us see how this principle is related to that branch of the argument which has been considered in this number.—

We say then, that, even if there were extant some positive evidence tending to establish the fact of the eminently spiritual, and long-continued prosperity of the ancient church; and if that evidence were not contradicted as it is by proofs of defection and apostasy, yet even in that case, it would be unwise and dangerous to challenge our deference toward the opinions and practices of antiquity, on *that*, or any such ground; and for this simple and sufficient reason—That the regard we pay to *the Inspired Books themselves* does not rest on the supposition of the pre-eminent sanctity of *the apostolic churches*. The *facts* forbid our taking this ground; and religious principle forbids it as well. What are these facts?—They have often been adverted to; we shall here merely glance at them.

The epistle of James, displaying as it does, the stern, yet mild vigour and purity of the new Faith, and demonstrating its immeasurable superiority to any system of ethics then extant, indicates also a state of feeling, in the society addressed, of a very mixed kind, and such as, apart from some extraordinary restraining influence, could not fail, very speedily, to break forth into open disorders. This epistle, perused simply as an historical document, exhibits a holy man, affectionately remonstrating with a mass of persons who admitted, indeed, the principles to which he appeals, and yet yielded practical submission to them in a very imperfect manner.

The first epistle of Peter, directed at large to faithful persons dispersed over a wide surface, affords very faint historical indications;—yet the hint addressed to the Pastors, is proof enough of the existence of a tendency which so soon broke over all restraints of apostolic precept and example. The second epistle explicitly predicts, and graphically describes, the confusions and corruptions, intellectual and sensual, which we find almost immediately to have distracted and disgraced the infant church. Even if we had nothing but this ominous epistle before us, what room would be left for surprise in opening the early pages of church history? Those pages are the very counterparts of these predictions. The same must be said of the analogous, and nearly identical epistle of Jude. Many pure and blameless persons there were; but they were bound in a bundle with the lawless and the false.

An absolute historical consistency connects the epistles of Peter and Jude with those of the beloved disciple. They furnish proof of the reality and excellence of the doctrine of Christ; and proof too of such a mixture of elements, within the church, as would surely bring about whatever is found to mark its condition at a later time.

The epistles of Paul, vividly historical as they are, and especially those of them that were addressed to societies with which he had been personally conversant, serve, both in the way of facts mentioned, and of predictions, to open to us the volume of church history, and to anticipate whatever surprise its contents might otherwise occasion. A reform, more marvellous than any miracles, had been effected in all cities where the apostle had carried the faith of Christ. This is a fact unquestionably established by these epistles, and established in the most conclusive, because in an incidental manner. But the very same principles of historical analysis afford evidence of a state of things, in most of the early churches, which forbids our thinking of them as objects of reverence or imitation. The church of Corinth, including many sincere persons, was disgraced by extreme moral and ecclesiastical disorders. The churches of Galatia had, almost instantly, after receiving the Gospel, apostatised; making themselves the parents and patterns of errors which very early, in a modified form, spread from east to west, from north to south. What more have we assumed, concerning the north african church in the third century, than is involved in the moral and doctrinal declensions of Corinth and Galatia? The other epistles, just so far as they have an historical character, indicate the very same things, and wherever they are prophetic, the apostolic pencil is dipped in the most sombre colours. What were the elements at work in the churches consigned to the care of Timothy and of Titus? Can we affect to be amazed in finding the churches of the third and fourth centuries such as they were, when it is manifest that the apostolic energy was everywhere contending hardly with principles of confusion which waited only to be freed from the restraints of a miraculous administration of church power, to burst abroad?

But it would be enough for dismissing every illusion concerning church history, to listen to our Lord's own, and solemn

description of the seven churches, which, if any, seemed favourably placed for retaining their purity. Does not this message to the seven churches comprise a synopsis of all church history?—has it not a predictive meaning? and what is its amount? Of the seven churches, two only are exempt from blame: within three, the contending elements of good and evil were doubtfully balanced. Two had so far fallen, the one into formality, the other into worldly indifference, that their recovery was only not absolutely hopeless.

And now, with the actual evidence before us, can we believe that a purity belonged to the church in the second, third, and fourth centuries, which the Inspired books, and the very words of our Lord, forbid our attributing to the first? The wish, however natural or amiable it may be, to force such a supposition out of the evidence, is unwise:—a persistence in this attempt, after proof afforded of its futility, must be prompted, either by an abject superstitious temper, or by a sinister intention, and the consequence, if haughtily carried forward, cannot but prove prejudicial to the credit of christianity itself. To stand by silent, while palpable delusions, and which one has the means of exposing, are promoted by learned and official persons, is impossible;—it would be highly culpable to do so; or even if one might so observe silence, the infidel will not restrain himself in any such manner. In these days of active research, as well as of bold unbelief, there will not long be wanting some who, rejoicing to find the Gospel associated by its professed friends, and by persons of the highest repute, with the errors and absurdities—the superstitions and the frauds, of the ancient church, will take up Gibbon's pen with a new advantage, and urge an irresistible argument which would not fail to overthrow the faith of thousands.

Whatever temporary damage may accrue to any from our pursuing the present inquiry, it has become inevitable to follow it. All the blame rests with those whose inconsiderate zeal has left us no alternative.

ANCIENT CHRISTIANITY;

No. 6,

CONTAINING A SKETCH OF

THE DEMONOLATRY OF THE CHURCH

IN THE FOURTH CENTURY:

TOGETHER WITH

A SUPPLEMENT TO THE FIFTH NUMBER.

LONDON:—JACKSON AND WALFORD.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY R. CLAY, BREAD STREET HILL.

CONTENTS OF THE SIXTH NUMBER.

PAGE

STATEMENT OF THE HYPOTHESIS ON WHICH A RELIGIOUS DEFERENCE TO ANTIQUITY MIGHT BE MADE TO REST 137

THE HYPOTHESIS OF CHURCH PRINCIPLES EXEMPLIFIED IN THE INSTANCE OF THE ANCIENT DEMONOLATRY 153

CHRISTIANISED DEMONOLATRY IN THE FOURTH CENTURY 173

Bishop Newton's Allegations on this subject, and the Evidence to which he appeals, from the writings of Basil 174

(Ephraim Syrus) Gregory Nazianzen 178

Gregory Nyssen 181

Chrysostom 191

Polytheism and Idolatry 214

The Acclamation of the Second Council of Nice 219

THE GENERAL INFERENCE, AFFECTING THE HYPOTHESIS OF CHURCH PRINCIPLES 222

CONTENTS OF THE SUPPLEMENT.

PAGE

Passages from Bishop Newton's Twenty-third Dissertation. iii

The original Passages from Salvian's Treatise, De Gubernatione Dei, cited, or referred to in the Fifth number vii

Citations in support of Salvian's Testimony, from Augustine, Chrysostom, Ammianus Marcellinus, and Cyprian xxix

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE SIXTH NUMBER.

Some who have honoured these Numbers with critical notices are proclaiming, in a tone of triumph, that the Author has not replied to their specific objections. A few months may perhaps convince such of my Reviewers, that they have exulted too soon.

Looking forward now to the near termination of my labours in this controversy, I find it easy to listen calmly to these precipitate expressions, while I hold to my course—first intent upon the accomplishment of my main purpose; and then not indifferent to what may attach to the manner in which I shall have pursued it.

If the phrase might be used for a moment by a christian writer, I should say that I meditate a threefold revenge, to be taken of my many assailants.—The *first*, that of shewing them that I have the temper to gather instruction, even from such critics.—The *second*, that of removing, by their aid, from the mass of evidence, whatever may have afforded them a momentary triumph; and the *third*, that of using a redoubled energy in

the work, which I trust I shall accomplish, of fully convincing reasonable men that my opponents are in the wrong.

Christian readers, I am calmly confident, will see reason to grant that the attempt to restore the notions and practices of the third and fourth centuries, is not merely unwise, but in the last degree mischievous.—In other words, That the four great and characteristic articles of Ancient Christianity, namely, ASCETICISM—the prominence of the SACRAMENTAL and RITUAL ADJUNCTS of the Gospel—DEMONOLATRY, and HIERARCHICAL DESPOTISM, are, severally and collectively, irreconcileable with the general purport, and with the precepts, with the letter, and with the spirit of APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY, as exhibited in the books of the New Testament.

The first of these articles I have already considered formally, and the second incidentally:—the *third* (very imperfectly exhibited within the compass of a few pages) occupies the present number:—the *fourth* is yet to be dealt with, in deducing a conclusion from the arduous question concerning the pretensions to miraculous powers, advanced by the church, from the commencement of the fourth century, and onward to the present moment. This subject involves, it will be seen, the THEORY OF ROMANISM.

In presenting the evidence contained in the present number, I have endeavoured to compromise opposite objections. To have adduced, in every instance, the original, *and* a translation, would have compelled me, either to double the extent of the work, or to halve the quantity of evidence. To give translations *only* cannot but afford occasion to captious and disingenuous criticism. To adduce the original passages *only* is a method unsatisfactory to the mass of readers. I have, so far as possible, combined the advantages of the three modes in this number.—In a few peculiar cases giving the original, as well as a version;—in others, the original and a condensed expression of its import:—in some, the original alone, or at least the latin version of Greek authors; and which, whether better or worse in itself, was at least made with no view of

adapting the evidence it conveys, to the purposes of the present controversy. In other instances I have offered a translation only, yet making such references as will enable the learned reader easily to follow my footsteps. By these various means, I trust the reader will be satisfied that he is not intentionally, or in any material point, misled by the author.

As to the fidelity of these translations (concerning which I shall have more to say in the end) I confidently throw myself on the candour of all to whom such an appeal may hopefully be made; especially of those of them who know what literary labour of this peculiar description is. The present is an urgent controversy, and in no other way to be treated, than by a copious appeal to the most voluminous and difficult (not to say repulsive) class of books. More than a hundred folio volumes, many of them of the largest dimensions, are to be cited, and the evidence they furnish is to be wrought into the continuity of an argument; and all this is to be done in combination with other, and equally laborious tasks, and with many and various engagements. It is idle to say—"Take more time." My persuasion deepens every hour, that the occasion admits of no delay. Nevertheless, and under all disadvantages, and unaided as I have been, I have the testimony of the most competent persons (nay, lately of my opponents) that the Evidence adduced in these numbers has not been falsified—that it has been, in the main, correctly rendered.—For the rest, I have no solicitude:—the translations might have been more elegant or more precise;—but for the purposes of the controversy, they are efficient, and trustworthy.

A portion of this number is occupied with a Supplement, containing, as well the original passages cited in the preceding number from Salvian, and to which I beg to direct the reader's attention, as several passages from other writers, confirmatory of his evidence. For these additional testimonies I challenge a particular regard. They prove all that has been alleged, and more than need be proved, to make good what has been affirmed.

To the next number, and which will, I hope, speedily follow this, I propose to append, in the same manner—original proofs, and new illustrations of the argument as it proceeds; and in concluding my labours, and after replying to every reasonable criticism, I hope to supply, in the way of indexes and particular references, every sort of aid to those who may be inclined to follow home my citations.

STANFORD RIVERS,
November 26, 1840.

[Price 2s. 6d.

No. 6.]

ANCIENT CHRISTIANITY,

&c. &c.

STATEMENT OF THE HYPOTHESIS ON WHICH A RELIGIOUS DEFERENCE TO ANTIQUITY MIGHT BE MADE TO REST.

If there yet be any who could claim a deference as due to the opinions and practices of the ancient church on the plea of its eminent purity, they are bound to produce evidence—not otherwise contradicted, to that effect; and it must be shown, especially, that the church of the fourth century was incorrupt and holy; for it is the rightful authority of *that* period which is now in question.

The facts already adduced in the course of this work, together with the copious evidences which will be found in the supplementary sheets, exclude absolutely (as I believe) any such pretension. The evil tendencies of human nature being in every age the same, and the social system having been at that time in a condition of rapid decay, while the corrective energies of Christianity were almost nullified by fatal corruptions—doctrinal, ethical, and ritual, those times exhibited, on all sides, a sorrowful spectacle of wild extravagance, and of general dissoluteness:—an ill-directed intensity of the religious emotions, at particular centres; while the surface of society displayed the gross habits and usages of the ancient polytheism, slightly glozed over by christian forms.

The more copiously the actual evidence is searched into and adduced, the more difficult will it become to sustain any opinion materially differing from the one here expressed; and although a contrary feeling may be long and passionately adhered to, it must gradually give way before irresistible proofs.

But if the ground of the imaginary superior purity of the ancient church be abandoned, then the promoters of church principles must resort, either to the Hypothesis, now to be examined, or to the Theory, which will next come to be considered.

The HYPOTHESIS is,

—That the apostolic mind, relating to points nowhere explicitly advanced in the canonical writings, but orally transmitted, may yet be collected from the extant ecclesiastical records; and that when so collected, it carries with it all the authority which can attach to the text of the Gospels and Epistles; inasmuch as it is the same as well in substance, as in its source; differing merely in the mode of conveyance.*

If this hypothesis could be made good, then it would be proper to define Revelation as being—The supernaturally expressed will of God, conveyed to us, partly in the canonical writings, and partly in the traditions of the Church; and then it would follow—That, inasmuch as a material portion of Revelation is inaccessible to the mass of the people (to the laity generally) and indeed can never be clearly separated, the metal from the ore, by any individuals; not only the mass of the people, but even the majority of the clergy, must tacitly receive their faith and their rules of conduct from the dictation of the Church. Under such a system, the canonical scriptures, although they may be used for the purpose of stirring devout sentiments, can have no *conclusive* functions left to them, either as proof of doctrine, or as the rule of life; for the church must always, and first, be heard, before any point can be legitimately determined. Under such a system, too, it must always be desirable to remove occasions of perplexity from the popular mind, and to lay open only such portions of the Scriptures as may seem the most free from matter of doubt or controversy:—such as their simple narratives, and didactic apophthegms, and the purely devotional psalms. It must be regarded as a

* No. V.—p. 28.

cruel mockery to allow the laity to peruse the epistles—least of all those of Paul, which they will almost invariably interpret in a sense widely differing from that which the church attributes to them; and which will not fail to provoke the spirit of inquiry, in a manner not to be allowed.

Every ingenuous advocate of this, or of any similar Hypothesis, must grant that it involves the establishment of the strictest spiritual despotism; and that it is essentially opposed to the principles of the Lutheran and English Reformation. If the will of Christ be contained—partly in the canonical writings, and partly within the hundred tomes of ecclesiastical antiquity, and if the portion imbedded in these, be a joint rule with the portion expressed in those, then the Church, which alone possesses, and which alone understands, and is qualified to interpret *both*, is the real and sole authority in matters of religion. Private judgment, exercised in a perusal of the Scriptures, must be regarded as in an equal degree logically inconclusive in its inferences, and treasonable and impious in its pretensions.

Holding this hypothesis, one might yet dissent from the church of Rome, and disown her usurped authority, inasmuch as she has, by her own acknowledgment, legislated in doctrine and ritual; and she has done so on the ground of a Theory, which might carry us much further than this hypothesis would do. Nevertheless the despotism to which we must submit, is, in no sense, less absolute than that of the church of Rome; and in point of fact, the articles to be believed, and the usages to be observed under the one authority, differ very little from those enjoined by the other.

It is now therefore our part, with a foresight of the momentous consequence thereto appended, to inquire—Whether this Hypothesis, or any supposition essentially the same, can be reasonably maintained, and if maintained, carried into effect.

For the sake of conciseness, as well as to exclude every occasion of ambiguity, it is necessary distinctly to keep our hold of the supposition in question, as distinguished from assumptions or instances speciously intermixed, or inadvertently confounded with it.—

As for example;—we are to exclude all those instances, (and

some of them are momentous,) in which a principle or practice obscurely or doubtfully produced in the canonical Scriptures, receives illustration (sometimes determinatively so) from the otherwise recorded faith and practice of the early church. In such instances we are saved from the danger of attributing any "joint authority" to the uninspired ecclesiastical documents, by the simple circumstance (if we are indeed willing to regard it) that the illustrative evidence we are in search of is often derivable, in equal force, from pagan or heretical, as from christian and orthodox writings. Thus—and the one example may suffice—Pliny's letter to Trajan contains incidental evidence, nearly decisive, in relation to two or three points of apostolic, or very early discipline. This letter then enters among the materials of church history; and, so far as it goes, it enables us, with more satisfaction than otherwise we could enjoy, to determine what is but ambiguously expressed in Scripture. The private and unlearned Christian may rejoice to have this heathen authority laid before him, as a confirmation of his practice in certain instances;—and yet he adheres to such practices on the sole authority of Scripture. In search of this kind of satisfaction, we read either Pliny or Justin Martyr, simply to ascertain some fact by the aid of their collated testimony.

The often mentioned instances of episcopacy and infant baptism come under this same head. What the apostles did and enjoined, as to church government, is a question which labours under some difficulty, if we look no further than to their extant writings. It becomes inevitable then that, on these points of history, we should seek information wherever we can find it. If a lost treatise of Seneca or Plutarch were at this moment to be produced from a Herculaneum, containing some incidental reference to the usages of the first Christians, there would undoubtedly be a rush of all parties toward the crumbling document. Yet whatever might be the argumentative product of this new evidence, those who might be the gainers by it, would surely know how to preserve their religious sentiments free from any religious deference toward Plutarch or Seneca. This mischievous confusion among our religious feelings, takes place only when it happens to be from the pages of *christian* antiquity that we derive

our incidental information, bearing upon doubtful apostolic practices.

Let it be supposed that every page of ancient *christian* literature had long ago perished, and that, in illustration of the meaning of the apostolic writings, we were compelled to turn, as our only resource, to the heathen writers of the same period. In that case the use to be made of such illustrative evidence would stand clear of all ambiguity—it is *illustration*, and nothing more, of the canonical document, to which alone any authoritative value attaches. As to unlearned readers of the Bible, in such a case they would listen to this foreign evidence, and assign to it more or less value; but it would share no particle of their religious deference: and if any despotic endeavour were made to overrule private judgment on the pretext of the incompetency of the unlearned to appreciate this extra christian evidence, it might at once be repelled on the plea that, whatever in Scripture is too obscure to be understood without the aid of pagan testimony, should not be ecclesiastically enacted, or enforced, in a manner which, confessedly, would not be warrantable apart from that testimony. We must not impose upon Christians, on the authority of Pliny, that which the unelucidated authority of Peter could not be shown to enjoin.

On the other side, our present argument must be kept clear from any entanglement with the THEORY hereafter to be considered, and which supposes a legislative authority to reside, from age to age, in the heads of the visible church—an authority tantamount to Scripture. This Theory is the distinction of the modern Romish church.

As an instance illustrative of the practical difference between the hypothesis and the theory, we may name—communion *in one* kind. It is acknowledged that the church has denied the cup to the laity by her sovereign authority, exercised in a late age. And in like manner the universal celibacy of the clergy, and the prohibition of the Scriptures to the people, and the celebration of worship in an unknown tongue, and the nundination of indulgences, and the œcumenic authority of the pope:—these things, which are the characteristics of *popery*, can be defended only on the basis of the Theory of a permanent and miraculously attested power to

legislate, irrespectively of the Canonical Scriptures. As to the excellence and merit of the ascetic life, as to the reverence due to images, and to the relics of the saints, as to the invocation of the saints, and specially of the Virgin—as to the purgatorial and expiatory fire, as to the efficacy of prayers for the dead, as to the doctrine of sacramental efficacy, and a belief concerning the eucharistic rite identical in popular apprehension with the doctrine of transubstantiation, as to the illimitable and irresponsible power of the clergy, as to the efficacy of penance;—these things, and others of the same quality, they were inherited by Rome from a high antiquity, and therefore they are all saved by the hypothesis which we are now to examine. *These* things are all involved in "Catholic Truth:"—these things claim veneration as being of undefined antiquity; and unless a way of escape from the hypothesis before us can be discovered, to these articles of belief, and to these practices, the protestant church, in that case confessing the presumption of its reformers, ought to return.

It is surely reasonable to admit the probable supposition that many things, whether of belief on extrinsic subjects, or of discipline, were orally conveyed to the first converts, of which no trace (or none but the most obscure) is discoverable in the canonical Scriptures. So far therefore the hypothesis in question starts from a point historically good. An *à priori* argument recommends it to our acceptance; and if it were possible to distinguish, without a shadow of doubt, the fragmenta apostolica, as they lie scattered on the field of antiquity, then only one point more would need to be supplied, in bringing these particles to their places in the body of Revelation. This one point is however essential, and it is nothing less than some apostolic mandate, saying,—"*These things*, do and teach." Such an injunction wanting, then these fragments, even if they were recovered, could never be brought home to the consciences of Christians, as of perpetual obligation. For as, on the one hand, nothing is more probable than that our Lord and his apostles should have left with their immediate hearers many things not afterwards consigned to writing; so is it equally probable that these unrecorded mandates, or revelations, should have been intended to subserve some temporary

purpose only. In this case the recovery of them, even could it be effected, would perplex more than edify the modern church.

But is it possible (if it were desirable) to discover these fragments, and to discriminate them? This question will be best answered by bringing it to the test of some definite instance. We must however keep in view the conditions, hard as they are, under which any attempt must be made to reinstate the (supposed) remains of apostolic teaching, as conveyed by the extant literature of the early church. Every thing depends upon a knowledge of the facts in this case.

On any occasion in which we were labouring to bring together and to restore the scattered rudiments of a remotely established scheme of government, or system of belief, it is clear that the value of the information we were seeking would be directly as the antiquity of the document; or, otherwise stated, inversely as these documents are more recent. Recorded usages or opinions, authentic and available only so far as they may be relied upon as genuine, must be derived with a constantly diminishing certainty or satisfaction from later sources. The reason of this plain rule of historical inquiry is obvious. What later writers have repeated as ancient and genuine, may, in fact, have become much adulterated; or may be altogether supposititious.

In any instance analogous to the one now before us, to reject the more ancient evidences as insufficient, and to accept the more recent, would be a mode of procedure directly at variance with the reason of the case, and therefore not to be allowed, unless warranted by some circumstances altogether peculiar and peremptory. Writers occupying a position four hundred years down the stream of time, from the spring-head, *may* be supposed (let it be granted as *possible*) to convey some genuine particles of the original tradition, which had been altogether overlooked by their predecessors: but that we can hardly be too cautious or sceptical in admitting this sort of late testimony, is manifest.

The facts of the case, then, with which we are now concerned are these:—We are in search of GENUINE APOSTOLIC TRADITIONS; and with this view we naturally look, in the first instance, to the christian literature of the age next to that of the apostles. But the scanty (not to say vapid) writings of that age, few as they are,

and liable too to sweeping critical surmises, are found to be altogether insufficient for sustaining the platform of "catholic truth," as now attempted to be restored, after the model of the fourth century. That very part of the field of antiquity on which we ought to glean the fragments we are in search of, most abundantly, affords barely a few atoms of the kind. Even a clear testimony to the first principles of the Gospel, is with some difficulty extorted from these ancient Reliquiæ; and we are driven to put a charitable construction upon a few ambiguous phrases, before we can affirm some of these earliest writers to have been sound, as to the prime elements of a christian belief. We float down the stream of time as far as to the commencement of the third century before our materials become at all copious, and before the more characteristic articles of "catholic truth" make their appearance with any distinctness. The writings of Tertullian, Cyprian, and Origen, comprise very nearly all we can now know of the opinions and practices of an age which itself was remote enough from the times of the apostles to have given scope to extensive corruptions of faith and doctrine.*

Let the rule of analogy be applied to this critical instance.—All protestants allow that gross superstitions prevailed in the church in the age of Gregory I.; but the modern advocates of

* From Minutius Felix, Dionysius of Alexandria, Gregory Thaumaturgus, and Arnobius, with whatever fragments of the same period may have come down to us, extremely little is to be gathered touching the points now in view. *It is not without the aid of the Fathers of the fourth century,* that church principles can be established. This should be distinctly understood. To these writers the appeal is formally made;—the authority of a higher antiquity is indeed gladly accepted, so far as it goes; but the stand must be made in the Nicene age. One of the most recent, as well as specious publications of the Tractarian school, distinctly and repeatedly admits that catholic truth is now about 1500 years old, and dates from a time when the church was blessed with "wiser men than you, or any of us (videlicet—'*us*,' Oxford Tract Writers) in the nineteenth century." These "great and good men," living "fifteen hundred years ago," are those to whose "testimony in the present day we must look back, through the long mist of years, *whenever we want to know what is good and evil*—what will make us happy," &c.—Sewell's Christian Morals: chap. I, II, III. This ingenious writer very properly, in sending the youth of England to school with the authors of "Fables and lying wonders," lays it down as an axiom that "doubt is a sin," and that "it is better to have the mind filled with innocent fairy tales, and visions of the fancy, than to keep it empty, and cold, and lonely, without an occupant."—P. 11.

antiquity affirm the Nicene age—one hundred and fifty years earlier, to have been pure in doctrine and practice. A change, therefore, from exemplary purity to gross superstition must, on this supposition, have taken place within the compass of one hundred and fifty years. Apply then this same period of time to the interval between Cyprian's episcopate and the apostolic age, and it will carry us up to the moment of the death of the last surviving apostle. On the ground, therefore, of historical *probability*, a proportionate corruption may be believed to have taken place between the apostolic and the Cyprianic age.

We say then that, inasmuch as the apostolic fragments we are in search of do not in fact meet the eye until we have travelled far down from the source of truth — far enough to have given room for any extent of adulteration—the process of gathering and of discriminating them is liable to every suspicion, and must be conducted under circumstances of the most extreme disadvantage. A search, under the pressure of difficulties so peculiar, is a desperate task. But three hundred years, reckoning from the death of the apostles (John excepted) bring us to a field on which these supposed fragments of apostolic tradition, so long non-apparent, or very rare, may be gathered in abundance: only allow us to come down to the times of Athanasius and Basil, and then we may fill our basket easily with "apostolic traditions." The very same appears to be true of these apostolic traditions, which is affirmed to be true of the "true Cross;"—for whereas, during more than three centuries it was not to be found; in a little while after the "invention," Europe, and Asia, and Africa, were thickly strewed with the inestimable substance; and a little later, the collected fragments would have equalled in bulk the timbers of a man of war!

Are all these chips genuine? The church of Rome solemnly warrants every bit, and every bit boasts its miracles! But will protestant writers go so far?—if not, unless we can find a rule of discrimination, we must reject the whole.

We shall do well, however, to bring our hypothesis to the test of some determinative instance; and if one fails to be conclusive, another will probably remove every doubt.

I here request the reader's especial attention to the logical conditions of our immediate argument.

For the sake of the argument we have granted the probability that the extant remains of early ecclesiastical literature contain some genuine fragments of apostolic traditions, and which may support notions and practices that could not be derived at all, or not in a satisfactory manner, from the canonical Scriptures.

We moreover grant (also for the sake of the argument, although the supposition be laden with improbabilities) that these apostolic traditions did, after two or three centuries, and, like a river flowing beneath the sands, actually burst forth at length, in an uncorrupted state, and that they are found embodied in the opinions and usages of the Nicene age.

These assumptions then, we say, involve, if the Hypothesis in question be practically valid, the condemnation of all protestant communions, not excepting the Episcopal Church of England, and demand from those who admit them a rejection of the Reformation, if not a return to Rome. It will appear that we must either reject this Hypothesis, or renounce protestantism.

We take then as our determinative instance, the scheme of demonolatry, or worship of spiritual heroes, of demons, and of their symbols, which protestants have been used to think of, and sternly to denounce as the IDOLATRY of the Romish church. Protestants, be it remembered, have so accounted it, notwithstanding the nice distinctions and refinements that have been put forward in its defence by the better class of romanists. These distinctions protestants have regarded as utterly futile, even in theory, and as miserably frivolous when brought to bear upon the actual usages of the mass of the people in popish countries. Every right-minded traveller in Spain, Italy, Ireland, and even in the more enlightened quarters of Romish supremacy, has been compelled to allow that popery, as to the vast majority of the people, is nothing better than a gaudy polytheism.

But now, this same worship of demons, in all its elements, such as—invocation, votive offering, veneration of images and relics, pilgrimages, tutelary dedications, and miraculous attestations, is *in*

its christianized form, older by several centuries than popery, and of far wider extent. Who shall say how old it is? In the fourth century—the times of the illustrious churchmen so often named in this controversy, it had reached a fully expanded condition, whether we regard the practices of the vulgar, or the apologies offered in its behalf by the learned. Later ages, although they may have added to its visible bulk—for its nature is perpetual accumulation, have not materially affected it, either in principle or in form. The modern calendar is indeed richer, by some hundreds of childish fables, than was the ancient calendar; but the apparatus of polytheistic worship, with its mummery, its knavish doings, and its vilifying influences, was as completely at work in and about the churches which Basil and Ambrose frequented, as it is in the churches on the same spots at the present moment.

But how old is this christianized worship of gods, and of their images? a question, perhaps, not susceptible of a satisfactory answer. Is it however as old as the apostles? did *they* give it their unrecorded sanction?—did *they* whisper a license to this effect? and is this principal element of "catholic truth" indeed a part of that apostolic traditional piety which we are bound learnedly to recover, and devoutly to restore?

This is indeed a weighty question; and from the affirmative it will be impossible to escape, if once we admit the Hypothesis now before us, as practicably available. The rudiments, at least, of demonolatrous worship (under christian forms) are, beyond question, of very high antiquity; nay, so congruous is this sort of superstition with the deep inclinations of the human mind, and so nearly universal has been its empire over the human family, that we might almost venture to affirm it as present, wherever it cannot be clearly proved to have been excluded. The restorers of antiquity tell us that "man is made to worship man," and that he must always seek some intervention, and some repose, short of the Eternal Throne!

The warmest and purest affections of our nature impel us to think much of the departed, whether it be those who are personally beloved, or who are reverenced as heads of a clan. This meditative affection naturally passes into the two forms of a

desire to benefit the dead—if that be possible, and of a desire to receive benefits through their agency. In proportion as the object of this regard falls below the high level of intellectual and moral excellence, the heart and the imagination tend toward the former class of feelings; in proportion as he rises above that level—toward the latter; and between the two, superstition fills its amplest measure of hope, fear, and servile observance. Then the invariable law of association leads us to connect these deep, tender, and reverential emotions with every material object, whether it be sites, images, pictures, relics, which offer themselves either as the natural, or the arbitrary symbols of unseen beings. To these powerful and universal impulses there need not be added—what is sure always, in fact, to attach itself to the physical elements of superstition, namely, the interested motives of the administrators of worship—the hierarchy. With these motives in operation, communities quickly, and invariably reach the depths of polytheistic infatuation.

To this strong tendency of human nature, the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the Prophetic dispensations opposed a stern, animated, uncompromising front of prohibition: and yet with how little success during the earlier periods of Hebrew history! At length however the lesson was effectively learned, and the Jew of the later era thoroughly entered into the spirit of the Law, considered as a witness against Idolatry—whether in its open, or its insidious forms. The ancient revelation was, in one word, a testimony against demon worship—against superstition, and against every one of its specious pretexts.

But how strong soever—or even irresistible, may be the presumption that the Christian dispensation would not, in this instance, be found to oppose itself to the Mosaic and prophetical, and that it did not come in to indulge mankind anew with the fond delights and natural solaces of polytheism, yet we must not at present take this for granted, inasmuch as it is the very question in dispute. It is one of the *critical questions* of the present controversy; for if determined on the one side, it condemns protestantism as a blasphemy;—if on the other, it condemns the "catholic truth" of the fourth century as a system of naked polytheism.

The rich, deep-seated demonolatrous principles and practices of the ancient church, present themselves under those very conditions which the Hypothesis now before us demands, and which it substantiates, when we are searching, among the remains of ecclesiastical antiquity, for the long buried fragments of apostolic tradition. Either the rudiments (at least) of this demonolatry did really descend from the apostles; or, if not, then the church which gave it birth, and which nursed and fed it, stands condemned as spiritually adulterous. There is only one way of escaping from this dilemma; and that is by aid of the THEORY to which the church of Rome has wisely and necessarily resorted:—the church, it says, hath instituted this worship, in virtue of the sovereign legislative authority with which she is invested, and which she well sustains by her miraculous gifts.

We are not in position to determine the present anxious question until we have opened this latter and most material part of the evidence. The religious reader ought to be cautioned not to dismiss the subject as if it were now prejudged, and could have no claim upon his serious attention; for, in one way or in another, it loudly demands the regard of the modern church, and most especially of the English episcopal church, which stands condemned by one alternative, while by the other, she is bound to effect some further measures of reformation.

The case is this:—the ancient Jewish Testimony against Polytheism and Demonolatry was sustained, from age to age, by miraculous attestations, and by prophetic gifts. But throughout the extent of the christian church, as we find it in the fourth and fifth centuries, Demonolatry, in all its characteristic principles and usages, stands also recommended by an ample, continuous, and openly declared miraculous economy:—by "signs, and wonders, and mighty acts," real or pretended. A large proportion of all the miracles triumphantly appealed to by the chiefs of the church in the fourth century, were wrought in attestation of some element of demonolatrous worship:—the thousands of cures effected at the shrines of the saints, and in consequence of importunate prayers *addressed directly to them*, or by application of their relics, stand on the page of church history, as evidences—if they be real, that the Mosaic economy had been abrogated, not so much in its

national rites, as in its centre principle, the condemnation of idolatry.

The apostolic dispensation occupies, therefore, the verge between the ancient prohibition of demon worship, and the Nicene church restoration of it, and attestation of it, by copious miraculous powers—real or pretended. No two systems can be more boldly opposed to each other than are the Mosaic and the Nicene. No principle is more momentous than the one which this opposition brings before us: no practices, called religious, can be more irreconcileable, the one with the other, than are those of the ancient Jewish worship, and of the worship everywhere prevalent in the churches of the fourth century. Both schemes appeal to divine attestations; both claim Christianity as their own;—the one by the golden chain of prophetic anticipation; the other by the suspicious links of tradition.

To which, then, in fact, does the apostolic dispensation belong? or does it belong to both? In other words, are we to believe that, though a stern theology had been imposed upon the Hebrew race—a theology which forbade them to touch or taste the poisonous luxuries of idol worship, the milder christian law invites the nations anew to the banquet of demons? Such is the question which our Hypothesis involves!

Before we have gone far in adducing evidence bearing upon this question, many readers probably will be inclined to stop me, in some such manner as this—"Well, even if too much that is very blameworthy may be gathered from the pages of later writers, you can never prove christian demon-worship to have been of high antiquity. You can never give a colour of probability to the supposition that it was an element of apostolic tradition."

Now although, in fact, a very high antiquity may be claimed for the rudiments, at least, of this pernicious superstition—an antiquity quite as high as belongs to other favourite portions of church doctrine, yet, so far as the present controversy is involved, I would willingly take my position on the ground of this very objection.

—The undisguised demonolatry of the fourth century was either an invention of that age; or it had descended, in its rudiments, from an earlier time.

—If it were an invention of that age, it either commands our submission as a legitimately evolved addition to apostolic doctrine (this is popery) or it was a gross and ruinous corruption.

—But if a corruption—then can we dare to go on attaching our faith to the men who were the very inventors and zealous promoters of it? If a corruption—then what is the tendency of the modern endeavour to bring the church back to this same foundation?

Let us however assume as true, what I cannot doubt to be the legitimate supposition in this case; namely, that the church of the fourth century only amplified the various superstitions connected with the invocation and commemoration of the dead, which it had inherited from the preceding age, and which came to it recommended by immemorial opinions and practices.

In this case, the facts present themselves as furnishing a critical instance which must be fatal to the HYPOTHESIS now in question. For here are superstitions of the very worst tendency, and which, at an early time, covered Christendom with all the enormities and follies of polytheism, yet springing from the bosom of the *ante-nicene* church. We are therefore compelled to conclude that, although it be probable that the ancient church was possessed of some genuine apostolic traditions, and which are not found in Scripture, these, whatever they may be, have become so blended with the most dangerous errors as to throw us back upon the only rule—the WRITTEN CANONICAL REVELATION of the Divine will. When we let go our hold of this Rule, we lose all safe guidance, and are sure to be misled.

Returning then to this only Rule, we do not hesitate to condemn, as impious and idolatrous, under whatever modifications it may appear, the ancient demonolatry. We utterly refuse to listen, even for a moment, to any of the tortuous extenuations by which, from Jerome's time to this, these adulterous practices have been excused or promoted. We have only one word for these vilifying impieties: we can only say—Away with them! Let not a vestige of such sin and folly be allowed to attach to any of our religious usages!

But as a necessary consequence of our taking this decisive course, we must strictly examine, by the sole guidance of the canon of

Scripture, *every other article of the ancient church system*. We care not to be told that such and such practices or notions are "of high antiquity"—that they are "undoubted apostolic traditions." We are at length cured of our timidity as to all pretensions of this sort. We must pass everything ancient, and which is not Scriptural, through the same sieve; and lest it should hereafter appear as if a trap had been laid for the reader, I will distinctly avow my belief that the sacramental doctrine and practice of the early church is involved, as well as its demonolatry, in the rejection of the Hypothesis we are considering.

THE HYPOTHESIS OF CHURCH PRINCIPLES EXEMPLIFIED IN THE INSTANCE OF THE ANCIENT DEMONOLATRY.

A TREATISE on the portentous subject now before us—the ancient demonolatry, would demand a separate examination of the several elements of the complicated superstitions which we here bring under consideration in their collective form. The reader however is requested to keep some leading distinctions in view, although we may not be able, in bringing together our evidence, to observe an exact order. Our miscellaneous citations will relate to—

I. The notions, practices, and sentiments of the christian VULGAR.

II. The opinions, explicit or implied, of the great divines, or, as we may call them, the philosophical class in the church:

III. The apologies and extenuations resorted to, and the active measures employed for promoting these superstitions, by these leading persons:

IV. The endeavours of such to check the abuses thence arising:

V. The miracles perpetually appealed to in attestation of practices directly idolatrous.

Then, as to the superstition itself, it embraces—

I. Opinions and practices connected with endeavours on the part of the living, to solace or benefit the souls of the departed.

II. Practices founded on the belief that the departed—especially eminent saints and martyrs, hear the prayers of their terrestrial votaries, and act in the presence of God as mediators, procuring for them, by their merits and advocacy, temporal and spiritual favours, not otherwise to be obtained.

III. Practices connected with the visible and tangible memorials and remains of the saints and martyrs, and the miraculous indwelling energies of their dust, bones, hair, teeth, or garments. Under this latter head might be ranged perhaps one-third, or let us say one-fifth, of the entire mass of what is called church history, from the fourth century downwards.

No one (not a romanist) who travels in countries where the Roman Catholic worship prevails (and the same is true of the East) is able, how indulgent soever may be his religious sentiments, or lax his protestantism, to resist the conviction that, in its practical meaning, and as to the great mass of the people, the invocation of saints, the adoration of images and pictures, and the veneration of relics, is—IDOLATRY; and that it is substantially the same as any other polytheistic worship. Even that eminent anti-protestant, the late Mr. Froude, although his training at home had led him to take the most favourable view possible of this sort of worship, and had induced him to "think people injudicious who talk against the Roman Catholics for worshipping saints, and honouring the Virgin, and Images, &c.," which things "may perhaps be idolatrous"—he could not "make up his mind about it"—yet even Mr. Froude, when he came to be better acquainted with the sentiments and practices of the people, finds he can no longer withhold what the protestant world has always thought to be the fitting designation of these devotional usages:—

"Since I have been out here, I have got a worse notion of the Roman Catholics than I had. *I really do think them idolaters*, though I cannot be quite confident of my information as it affects the character of the priests. . . . What I mean by calling these people idolaters is, that I believe they look upon the saints and virgin as good-natured people, that will try to get them off easier than the Bible declares, and that as they don't intend to comply with the conditions on which God promises to answer prayers,

they pray to them as a come off. But this is a generalization for which I have not sufficient data."*

It is allowed, moreover, that "The direct invocation of the saints is a dangerous practice, as tending to give, and often giving to creatures the honour and reliance due to the Creator alone."—We ask—

How often?—Gathering an answer from Mr. Froude's testimony while these practices were under his eyes, we must say—*ordinarily*, if not universally;—or at least so often that the exceptions are not of sufficient amount to screen the people at large from the heavy imputation of being idolaters.—"I really do think these people idolaters," says this partial witness.

But was Mr. Froude, or are his surviving colleagues so cased in protestant prejudices as not to listen to the distinctions insisted upon by all romanist writers, between veneration and worship—between dulium, hyperdulium, and latria? It does not appear that either he or they have been able to regard these distinctions as sound and sufficient. They know well that, practically, such refinements come to nothing; that the mass of the people neither understand nor regard them; that they are very nearly the same as were put forward by the philosophical apologists of the pagan worship; that they are to be accounted futile, nugatory, and altogether unworthy of a serious refutation.

It appears then to be acknowledged on all hands that, when we find a people directly invoking the saints and the virgin—kissing and kneeling to images, and directing the most solemn religious regards to relics, shrines, and the like trumpery, and taught and incited to do so by their priests—we may, notwithstanding all the distinctions or apologies put forward in exculpation of such practices, boldly call such people IDOLATERS. Wherever we find *the same worship*, recommended on *the same principles*, excused on *the same pleas*, and generating *the same sentiments*, we may think ourselves warranted in turning from the

* It is not without reluctance that I make any reference whatever to the offensive book called "Froude's Remains." Unhappy victim of a singularly malign temperament, and of a pernicious training.—Unhappy too in leaving the sombre and venemous flippancies of his journal in the hands of "friends" whose own infatuations have deprived them of all discretion.

sad spectacle, with these very words upon our lips—"REALLY THESE PEOPLE ARE IDOLATERS."

I request the reader therefore to take with him, as he peruses the following pages, this "authorized" judgment, and impartially to apply it, whatever the consequences may be, to every instance to which it may seem clearly applicable. Whoever is conscious of an anxious wish to evade so equitable an application of this decision would do well to inquire of what sort his own christianity is; for it may prove to be nothing better than that of millions of baptized persons, who, with the names of Christ and the apostles on their lips, have, in the sight of Heaven, stood undistinguished in the crowd of the worshippers of stocks and stones.

In no one element of its vast scheme has the church of Rome innovated so little as in that with which we have now to do. What popery inherited, popery has transmitted—saying nearly the same things in nearly the same terms, and doing nearly the same things in nearly the same manner, during the course of now more than fifteen hundred years. Whether, in so doing, she has, as she steadfastly professes, conformed herself to apostolic traditions, is a question the decision of which must establish, by implication, or must exclude, the hypothesis resorted to by the restorers of antiquity.

The creed of Pope Pius does not, as we shall see, in any way outstrip the authorities of the Nicene church on the point before us:—Similiter et sanctos una cum Christo regnantes, venerandos atque invocandos esse, eosque orationes Deo pro nobis offerre, atque eorum reliquias esse venerandas.—Firmissime assero, imagines Christi, ac Deiparæ semper virginis, nec non aliorum sanctorum habendas et retinendas esse, atque eis debitum honorem et venerationem impertiendam.

The carefully expressed decision of the council of Trent* on the same subject, does but define (and in very temperate language) the doctrine and practice of the ancient church, to the authority of which, in this instance, it confidently appeals. The sedulous terms in which the Tridentine Fathers rebut the imputation of idolatry, as thrown by "heretics" upon the Roman

* Sessio XXV. Hard. tom. x. p. 167.

Catholic church on this particular account, deserve especial attention, on two grounds;—first, because this denial of so grievous a charge is as explicit and as serious as that put forward by Jerome, or any other early promoter of the same demon-worship; and secondly, because, serious and explicit as it is, it has been found to be equally insufficient as an apology addressed to objectors, and unavailing as a caution given to the people. And if so, then it follows that the very same disavowal, and the same condemnation of idolatry, advanced by the Nicene Fathers, must, in all equity, be rejected as equally insufficient and unavailing for either of these purposes. In mere justice to all parties, let it be said that, while the Tridentine bishops express their most anxious desire (sancta Synodus vehementer cupit) to see every superstitious abuse and disorder which had been found to attach to this part of catholic worship removed and reformed, Jerome as vehemently resents all endeavours to check the forwardness of the people; while Ambrose and Chrysostom promote much more than they curb the same eagerness in their several churches. In this capital instance, as in others, an impartial inquirer cannot but acknowledge Tridentine Romanism to have been an improvement upon the Nicene church system; inasmuch as the bishops of the sixteenth century earnestly endeavoured to set bounds to the superstitions which those of the fourth century had as zealously promoted. Nor is this strange; for the ancient church having compromised the greatest truths, and thereby forfeited the guidance of the Spirit of Truth, rushed forward, without a check, on every path of artificial excitement; and being at the same time urged by the circumstances of its precarious conflict with the expiring paganism, as well as with innumerable new-born heresies, to strengthen itself by the nefarious arts of popular influence—by factitious terrors, hopes, wonders, it regarded no scruples of honour, and threw the reins on the neck of fanatical extravagance. There was nothing which a credulous and debauched mob would swallow that was thought too gross to offer to the sick appetite of the people:—witness Jerome's lives of the ascetics:—witness the Historia Religiosa! Witness the thousand and one tales so gravely repeated by the ecclesiastical historians of the time.

But at length, that is to say, after many centuries of illusion, the human mind awoke as from a trance :—searching inquiries were instituted in all directions; and even the papacy, the mistress of lies, felt and confessed the necessity of some return to truth. Without abandoning any one of its principles—without renouncing any one of its fatal errors, it did regulate, restrict, retrench; it did recede from ground on which it could no longer make good a standing; and the consequence has been a renovation of the vital forces of the Romish Church, and many practical reforms such as render modern romanism a far healthier system than was that which rested upon the nations at the moment when Augustine's star sunk below the horizon.

It is probable that the reader who may not be familiar with ancient ecclesiastical literature, will imagine that what is to be laid before him from the pages of the Nicene writers, may be susceptible of such explanations as will be enough to save these writers from the serious charge of promoting idolatry. How far there may be room for this sort of mild interpretation of their language will appear, when citations of similar quality, and almost identical influence, are produced from later writers, under whose eye the grossest impieties of demonolatry are confessed to have been practised. Men of intelligence and feeling, to whatever age they belong, express themselves in measured language; and so as to invite a candid interpretation of whatever ambiguous sentiments they may at any time advance. But we are to learn what such sentiments actually mean, by listening to the rendering they receive from the lips of brainless zealots, of bigots, and of demagogues; and by witnessing the consequent behaviour of the vulgar, to whom such doctrines are thus expounded. We do not much care to ask in what terms of specious sophistry a Bossuet may please to dress out the saint-worship of his church; but rather in what style popish priests, of the ordinary stamp, are accustomed to speak of the same worship to their abject hearers, and what is then done by these hearers. A learned prelate in this manner followed out to the extremity of the circle over which his influence extends, appears, must we not admit it? as the preacher and patron of idolatry. We shrink, perhaps, from the words; and yet when we come to move among the thousands whom he guides,

we are compelled, notwithstanding the whispers of the most indulgent charity, to come away saying—"Really we do think these people idolaters."

It is precisely thus with the great and accomplished divines of the fourth century:—they were the Bossuets or the Wisemans of that age, teaching in lofty style that which, in its vulgar interpretation, led the people to the rankest polytheism.

A few passages from Romanist and Greek writers of different periods (preceding the earliest dawn of the Reformation) will serve to prepare the reader for coming to an equitable judgment as to the real import of similar, or parallel passages, drawn from the pages of the Nicene Fathers.

It is not the statue, the stock or stone, say the apologists of pagan worship, that is prayed to, or to which we address our vows and offerings, but rather the invisible deity, of whom the image serves to remind us. 'Vota fieri Sanctis,' says Cajetan, 'non ut sunt creaturæ quædam rationis participes, sed ut in eis Deus habitat per gloriam, ita et vota, quæ fieri dicuntur sanctis fiunt Deo in sanctis.' Who is there that would not bend with the most profound reverence before one of the apostles, or eminent martyrs, were he now to appear alive among us? Why not then bow down before the image of that apostle or martyr—the representation of himself, now in the presence of God? It is God whom we worship, residing in the saints, and they in Him. With parity of reason Augustine denies (contra Faustum) that Christians "render religious worship, latriæ cultum, to the dead saints; but says they only worship them with the regard of affection and friendship, even as holy men of God may be regarded in this life." And who is there that would not commend his requests to the advocacy of the Mother of God, were she personally accessible? Is it then much more to do the like when, by the sensible aid of her image or fair picture, we are vividly reminded of her adorable self?

Preach, then, this doctrine to the common people, and at the same time let them find images of the Virgin and the saints at the corner of every street, and in every nook of the churches. Will our most zealous endeavours to maintain the principles of a pure theology avail to exclude the vilifying errors of polytheism?

all experience proves any such expectation to be as vain as the attempt is impious. But then if we reject with indignation Bellarmine's apology, and that of others, for papal saint worship, on what ground of equity can we admit *the very same* flimsy excuse when advanced by Jerome, Chrysostom, and Augustine? All doctors of the church, from the fourth century to the nineteenth, have protested aloud against the uncharitable imputation of worshipping images, pictures, or saints:—but this protest, whatever it may be intrinsically worth, is clearly worth as much in one age as it can be in another, and when uttered on precisely the same occasions. And if we are to derive our opinions of any such practices, and of any such apologies, from a "catholic antiquity" as high as the age of Isaiah, or of Ezekiel, we shall not hesitate utterly to condemn both.

"The heresy of the Iconoclasts," says the author of the Lives of the Saints, "which Leo the Isaurian had set up in the East, in 725, was espoused by Leo the Armenian, who, in December, 814, signified his intention of abolishing holy images, to the patriarch St. Nicephorus. The patriarch replied—'WE CANNOT ALTER THE ANCIENT TRADITIONS. We venerate images, as we do the cross, and the book of the gospels, though there is nothing written concerning them' (for the Iconoclasts agreed to reverence the cross and the gospels). The holy patriarch was deprived in 815, and Theodotus Cassiterus, an Iconoclast, at that time an equerry to the emperor, an illiterate layman, was ordained in his room. As soon as Nicephorus was deposed, the enemies of holy images began to deface, pull down, burn, and profane them, in all manner of ways. St. Theodorus the Studite, to repair this scandal as much as in him lay, ordered all his monks to take images in their hands, and to carry them solemnly lifted up in the procession on Palm Sunday, singing a hymn, which begins, 'We reverence thy most pure image,' and others of a like nature in honour of Christ."—*Butler*, Nov. 22.

It was "in honour of Christ," too, that "chips of the holy cross" were, in the fourth century, used as "defences of our temporal, and pledges of our eternal life." * In whose honour,

* Expressions several times used by Paulinus of Nola, and his friend, Sulpitius Severus.

may we ask, was it that Jehosaphat and Hezekiah signalized their zeal against the "holy images" which they "brake in pieces, burned in the fire, and stamped under foot?" But we are told that the prohibition of images was but a part of that imperfect dispensation under the old law, which the gospel has now superseded. "The emperor Leo the Isaurian had published his edicts against holy images in 726, and had found many followers, when St. John (Damascen) entered the lists against that heresy. He begins his discourse, "I think I ought no longer to remain silent, because I fear God more than an emperor of the earth." He lays down for the foundation of the dispute, THAT THE CHURCH CANNOT ERR: *consequently* it could never fall into idolatry. He explains what is meant by the adoration due to God alone, which, with St. Austin and other fathers, he calls Latria, and that inferior veneration which is paid to the friends and servants of God, which is entirely different, and infinitely beneath the former, and no more inconsistent with it than the civil honour which the law of nature and the holy scriptures command us to pay to princes and superiors. He shows that the veneration which we pay to the things which belong to God, as altars, &c., is not less distinct from the supreme honour we give to God. He says the precept in the old law which forbade images (if it be not to be restrained to idols) *was merely ceremonial, and only regarded the Jews;* which law, if we restore, we must equally admit circumcision and the sabbath. He certifies that the Iconoclasts allowed a religious honour to be due to the holy place on Mount Calvary, to the stone of the sepulchre, to the book of the Gospels, to crosses and sacred vessels. Lastly, *he proves the veneration of holy images by the testimony of the fathers.* In his second discourse he teaches at large that the emperor is intrusted with the government of the state, but has no authority to make decisions in points of ecclesiastical doctrine. In the third he demonstrates the use of holy images, from the traditions of the fathers."—*Butler*, May 6.

And yet, after all that St. John Damascen and his predecessors may advance in its defence, image worship, and the invocation of saints, has always been found to make the people such, that the most candid reporters are compelled to say, "Really we do think these people idolaters." Nevertheless, inasmuch as "the church

can never err," and as it has authoritatively recommended these practices, as well by its decrees, as by immemorial usage, what can we of this foolish age do but follow where we are so well led? Fifteen hundred years ago (340, or the time when these practices were distinctly sanctioned by the church) there lived "wise men of old, wiser than *you*, or any of us in the nineteenth century," and to whose testimony we are to look "whenever we want to know what is good and evil." Why should we not, in this instance, do what these "wise men of old" did and commanded, in order to make us also wise and good, and who, moreover, "will bear us safe from harm;" why, if it be admitted as a rule of piety that "to doubt is a sin;" and that we ought "in all things to act by testimony"?

That all good folks, in the times of these "wise men of old," had been well schooled in the doctrine that to doubt is a sin, is manifest; and we shall meet with many convincing illustrations of the fact:—it must have been to persons so trained that these honest and simple-hearted doctors addressed their epistles, when asseverating the genuineness of certain relics, and the miracles wrought by their means. Who but modern rationalists would admit a cold suspicion in reading the pious specifications, which abound in all church writers, from Cyril of Jerusalem to those of our own times?

"Pope Gregory (I.) sent to the empress Constantina a brandeum, or veil, which had touched the bodies of the apostles, and assured her that miracles had been wrought by such relics ("to doubt is a sin"). He promised to send her also some dust filings of the chains of St. Paul, of which relics he makes frequent mention in his epistles. . . . Writing to Theodelinda, queen of the Lombards, he mentions that he sent her son, the young king, a little cross, in which was a particle of the wood of the true cross, to carry about his neck. Secundinus, a holy hermit near Ravenna, god-father to this young king, begged of the pope some devout pictures. St. Gregory, in his answer says, "We have sent you two cloths containing the picture of God our Saviour, and of Mary, the holy Mother of God, and of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and one cross; also, for a benediction, a key which hath been applied to the most holy body

of St. Peter, the prince of the apostles, that you may remain defended from the enemy."—*Butler*, March 12.

"To doubt is a sin:" and yet, one whom we are bold to name as also "a wise and good man," and who lived *eighteen hundred years ago*, commanded those to whom he wrote to "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good;" and also to "reject old wives' fables." But must we think St. Gregory to have been an "old wife?" or if so, what were the writers of an earlier age, from whom he had received these venerable matters?

Popes and doctors knew well enough what they were about, while employed in raking up bones, and in finding "true crosses," and in sending dust, rags, and chips, to believing kings and queens; meantime there was, among private persons, and the simple-minded, much sincere and intense fanaticism, connected with the same superstitions, and which, no doubt, wrought some unfeigned reformations. The following is a favourable sample of such instances:—it belongs to the time of Theodosius, the younger, or about the year 430. The commencement of the story is not of a very manageable sort: let it then be understood that a "holy man," is conversing with "a female anchorite," also "holy," whom he had awkwardly surprised in the wilderness of the Jordan. She recounts the shame of her early life, and the manner of her conversion at Jerusalem, during the festival of the Exaltation of the Cross. "On the day appointed for the festival, all going to church, I mixed with the crowd to get into the church, where the holy cross was shown and exposed to the veneration of the faithful; but found myself withheld from entering the place by some secret but invisible (invincible?) force. This happening to me three or four times, I retired into a corner of the court, and began to consider with myself what this might proceed from; and seriously reflecting that my criminal life might be the cause, I melted into tears. Beating therefore my sinful breast, with sighs and groans, I perceived above me a picture of the Mother of God. Fixing my eyes upon it, I addressed myself to that holy virgin, begging of her, by her incomparable purity, to succour me, defiled with such a load of abominations, and render my repentance the more acceptable to God! I besought her I might be suffered to enter the church doors, to

behold the sacred wood of my redemption; promising from that moment to consecrate myself to God by a life of penance, taking her for my surety in this change of my heart. After this ardent prayer, I perceived in my soul a secret consolation under my grief; and attempting again to enter the church, I went up with ease into the very middle of it, and had the comfort to venerate the precious wood of the glorious cross which brings life to man. Considering therefore the incomprehensible mercy of God, and his readiness to receive sinners to repentance, I cast myself on the ground, and after having kissed the pavement with tears, I arose and went to the picture of the Mother of God, whom I had made the witness of my engagements and resolutions. Falling there on my knees before her image, I addressed my prayers to her, begging her intercession, and that she would be my guide. After my prayer I seemed to hear this voice, If thou goest beyond the Jordan, thou shalt there find rest and comfort. Then weeping and looking on the image, I begged of the holy queen of the world that she would never abandon me."—*Butler*, April 9.

Whether this sort of devotion, of which "a creature"* is the immediate object, and the Creator the remote, should be called "relative, or absolute worship," we will not positively say; but should be inclined to think that, if strictly analyzed, it would appear to be the *absolute* worship of the creature, and the *relative* worship of the Creator. Whatever it may be, such has been the piety of the vast majority within the pale of the "church" from the fourth century downwards.†

* Ecclesiastical Almanac, 1840, p. 55.—"The transcendent dignity of that glorious creature."

† An affecting instance of the vehement tendency of the human mind—and even the most accomplished—toward this dangerous species of superstition, has just now presented itself in the lately published Life of Niebuhr; and which has no doubt met the reader's eye in the pages of the Quarterly Review. What is the legitimate practical inference from such instances?—That Christian teachers do well to encourage men to indulge this propensity, and thus to "make flesh their arm," and to seek help in trouble from the dead? Surely not: and is it possible to think of those who deliberately did this, invoking the virgin and the saints on all occasions themselves, and teaching the people to do the like—as our "best guides," and the men to whom we should refer "whenever we want to know what is good and evil?" It is indeed most melancholy to think of a man like Niebuhr, and a staunch Lutheran too,

And with what depth of feeling, with what constancy and self-denying zeal, has this christianized polytheism been upheld from age to age! To read the life of St. Nicephorus, patriarch of Constantinople, and who was secretary to the second council of Nice, which restored the adoration of images, one could think nothing less than the highest truths to have been at stake. What was in fact the object of this intense feeling was the defence of the most frivolous and degrading system of idolatry that the world has ever seen. Almost the very language of certain "Tracts" is employed by this fervent personage, and his associates, in their endeavours to oppose the iconoclastic "rationalism" of their times. "To give an authentic testimony of his faith during the time of his consecration, he held in his hand a treatise he had written in defence of holy images; and after the ceremony laid it up behind the altar, as a pledge that he would always maintain *the tradition of the church.*" But those were evil times, and the patriarch "seeing the storm gathering," which threatened that great article of catholicity—the adoration of images, "spent most of his time in prayer, with several holy bishops and abbots." Euthymius, bishop of Sardes, said, "For these eight hundred years past,* since the coming of Christ, there have been always pictures of him, and he has been honoured in them. Who shall now have the boldness to abolish so ancient a tradition." St. Theodorus, addressing the heretical emperor, said, "My lord, do not disturb the order of the church; God hath placed in it apostles, prophets, pastors, and teachers. You he hath entrusted with the care of the state; but leave the church to its pastors." My immediate purpose forbids my citing more than a few words of the highly characteristic epistles of pope Gregory III. to the emperor Leo.† They breathe the genuine spirit of the high churchman, and I will venture to say, cannot be perused without reminding the reader of many passages in the Oxford Tracts. How deep, how fervent, how rich in scriptural quotation, how bold in asserting the supremacy of the

knowing nothing, as it seems, of Him "who heareth prayer," and therefore "imploring help of his Amelie"—to relieve the anguish of his Margaret!

* Not quite so many. † Hard. tom. iv. p. 1—18.

ecclesiastical power, and how decisive in resenting the imputation of idolatry! Let us plainly be told whether we should take part with pope Gregory, or with the emperor Leo, in this instance. Et dicis nos lapides et parietes ac tabellas adorare. Non ita est ut dicis, Imperator; sed ut memoria nostra excitetur, et ut custodia et imperita crassaque mens nostra erigatur, et in altum provehatur per eos, quorum hæc nomina, et quorum appellationes, et quorum hæ sunt imagines; et non tamquam deos, ut tu inquis: absit; non enim spem in illis habemus. Ac si quidem imago sit Domini, dicimus: Domine Jesu Christe, Fili Dei, succurre et salva nos. Sin autem sanctæ matris ejus, dicimus: Sancta Dei Genitrix, Domini Mater, intercede apud Filium tuum, verum Deum nostrum, ut salvas faciat animas nostras. Sin vero martyris—Sancte Stephane, qui Christo sanguinem tuum fudisti, qui ut protomartyr loquendi confidentiam habes, intercede pro nobis. Et de quovis martyre, qui passus est martyrium, ita dicimus, tales per illos preces offerimus. Nec ita est uti dicis, Imperator, quasi deos martyres appellemus. Averte cogitationes tuas malas, te obtestor, &c.

Most protestants will think Gregory's attempted exculpation of the church, in this instance, to have been equally futile and wicked. But what could it avail to remove images and pictures from the eyes of the people, while they were still encouraged to address their petitions, in the most absolute terms, to the saints and the virgin, and in doing which they were warranted by the highest authorities of the Nicene church? The iconoclastic reform, commendable as it was in itself, did but remove the *material* of idolatry, leaving the substance of it in the hearts, and on the lips of the people. This then touches our immediate argument. We condemn image worship.—Do we also condemn the invocation of the saints? If not, then we reprove the Reformation in a principal article of its departure from Rome. If we do, then we have no escape from the necessity of condemning the authors and zealous promoters of that practice. The writers and professors, therefore, who are now instructing the clerical youth of England in the duty of receiving their faith and practice without a question, from the "wise and good men" of the fourth century, must be understood to think the invocation of the saints a genuine element of christianity.

Why they do not more plainly say so, must be left to themselves to declare, and meanwhile for others to surmise.

Is it not equally cruel, and unjust, to inveigh against devout persons, as "Idolaters," who are found kneeling before an image of the virgin, in a Neapolitan church, while we read with indulgence, perhaps approval, passages like the following—

Inviolata, integra, planèque pura ac casta Virgo, Dei Genitrix, Maria, Regina omnium, spes desperantium, Domina nostra gloriosissima, eademque optima ac præcellentissima; sublimior cœlitibus; candidior solis radiis atque fulgoribus: honoratior Cherubim, et multis oculis claris spiritibus perspicacior: sanctior Seraphim, et incomparabiliter reliquis omnibus supernis exercitibus gloriosior: UNICA SPES PATRUM, gloria prophetarum, præconium apostolorum, ... per te reconciliati sumus Christo Deo nostro, Filio tuo dulcissimo. Tu peccatorum et auxilio destitutorum UNICA ADVOCATA ES . . . . . ô Domina princeps, atque regina præstantissima, et perquam benedicta . . . . . sub tuum præsidium confugimus . . . . protege et custodi nos. . . . . sub tuâ denique tutelâ et protectione tuti sumus: quare ad te unicam confugimus.

Many pages might be filled with this impious bombast: it is found in the work of Ephrem Syrus* (de Sanct. Dei Gen. Virgin. M. laud.) whether rightfully assigned to him, or not, we need not *here* inquire, inasmuch as these samples of antiquity are produced merely for the purpose of enabling the reader the better to estimate the enormous inconsistency of those who, when they visit popish countries, profess to be shocked at the "idolatry" of the common people; while at home, they are placing, on a level with Holy Scripture, the very writings in which this same idolatry is shamelessly expressed. Is what follows to be accounted relative worship only?—

Ave peccatorum refugium, atque diversorium. Ave laborantium propitiatorium. Ave profugium in Jerosolimis. Ave throne Creatoris nostri gloriosissime. Ave Œvi splendor illustrissime ac fulgentissime. Ave spes omnium proborum, rebus adversis

* *These* citations from Ephrem are to be found in the Thesaurus Patrum; Paris, 1823, vol. v. p. 20, *et seq.* In afterwards quoting this Father in support of my argument, I shall confine myself to the text of the best edition.

afflictorum. Ave dulce conversorum solamen, atque præsidium. Ave virorum pariter, atque mulierum, regina et patrona. Ave Dei et hominum mediatrix optima. Ave totius terrarum orbis conciliatrix efficacissima. Ave Domina nostra!

Adesto mihi nunc et semper, ô Virgo Dei Genitrix, mater misericordiæ, benigna et clemens.

Virgo, Domina Dei Genitrix, quæ Salvatorem Christum et Dominum nostrum in utero portasti, *in te spem meam omnem repono, et in te confido, quæ sublimior es omnibus cœlestibus potestatibus . . .**

Many pages of like quality might soon be produced from the works of the two most fervent and affecting of the Fathers —Bernard and Bonaventura. But it is enough. Only let the reader bear in mind the fact that such was the worship of the church at a time when its "solemnities" are recognised as edifying, by Oxford divines. It is not until it is interpreted by a reference to the sources whence it proceeds, that a certain style of "commending" the ever-blessed virgin can be understood by modern and protestant readers.

"On this day (the Festival of the Assumption) the church (what church?) celebrates the happy departure of the Virgin Mary, and her *translation into the kingdom of her Son*, in which she received from Him a crown of immortal glory, *and a throne above all the saints and heavenly spirits. . . .* This solemnity, in ancient martyrologies, is promiscuously called the Assumption, Passage, or Repose of the Virgin Mary, and was celebrated *with the utmost solemnity, at Jerusalem in the fifth and sixth ages.*" "Such then is *the transcendent dignity of that glorious creature*, whose *advent* upon earth the church to-day recommends to the meditation of the faithful."—*Eccles. Alm.* p. 55.

A curious coincidence will not fail here to recur to the reader: I have just above reported an instance, illustrating the style of christian worship *at Jerusalem*, in the *fifth age*. From that instance, as well as from innumerable examples on record, it appears that the Virgin—the Mediatrix Optima, was then and there the object

* The reader is requested to compare this language with that of the Editors of the Ecclesiastical Almanac, 1840, p. 52.

of direct, exclusive, and absolute adoration; and that it was to her that penitents were directed to have recourse, as to their best friend; she being the all-potent queen of heaven and of earth. On the ground of this coincidence, I beg to put a question or two to those whom it may concern. Do the Editors of the Ecclesiastical Almanac employ the phrase "the utmost solemnity," in its usual, and commendatory sense?

Do these Editors know that this "utmost solemnity" actually included the direct worship of the Virgin Mary, carried to the highest pitch of blasphemous extravagance?

Do these Editors wish the modern and English church to imitate the church at Jerusalem, in these "solemnities," as practised in "the fifth age?"

To these questions it would be well to furnish plain answers, becoming honest men, whose purposes may all be confessed.

When sturdy Saracens broke in upon the church, and beheld with manly disgust the abject polytheism which then polluted it, they exclaimed—"You Christians worship a goddess!"—"Oh no," replied the orthodox, "our QUEEN, although she be the queen of heaven, as well as of earth, and although she occupies "a throne above all the saints and heavenly spirits, (Eccles. Al.) is still only a glorious CREATURE." There is in fact a deep meaning couched in the well-considered phrase—"that glorious CREATURE;" for unless this point were specified, who would not suppose the occupant of the eternal throne, wielding "all power in heaven and in earth," to be a goddess?

Whether those who, in "the fifth age," took part at Jerusalem, in the "solemnities" of the feast of the assumption, always rightly distinguished between the hyperdulium, and the dulium, does not appear. But it *does* appear that the church of the Holy City had reached, so early as the fifth century, a stage on the road of impiety, which it did not surpass during the lapse of the following twelve centuries. As a proper note to the "note" on the "Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary," I take the liberty to report a decision of a Synod of Jerusalem, held there under the auspices of the Patriarch, so lately as the year 1672, and which exhibits a degree of caution, by no means always regarded in the

"fifth and sixth age." The latin version of the greek is sufficiently exact.

Porro duplicem sanctis cultum adhibemus. Alterum quippe Verbi Divini Matri, quem Hyperduliam appellamus, enimvero Dei (et hujus quidem solius) ut famula vere sit, et ipsa Deipara; at Mater ejus est, utpote quæ unam Trinitatis personam in carne genuit. Quare omnium cum sanctorum, tum angelorum longe superior prædicatur ("and a throne above all the saints and heavenly spirits"—Eccl. Al.) unde et hyperdulico eam cultu veneramur. Alterum vero quem et dulicum vocamus, sanctis angelis, apostolis, prophetis, martyribus omnibus, denique sanctis, adhibemus.—Hardouin, Tom. xi. p. 259.

It was thus that the Church of Jerusalem, in the seventeenth century, raised its voice in support of "catholic truth," and protested against those worst of heretics, *οἱ Καλονῖνοι*.

But another question forcibly presents itself.—If it be true "that Scripture was written, not to exalt this or that particular saint (not even the Blessed Virgin) but to give glory to Almighty God" (Newman's Sermons, vol. ii. p. 148), and we suppose this must be granted, then for what purpose were those books written which directly encouraged the "solemnities" in honour of particular saints, and especially of the Virgin, wherewith the church of the fifth and sixth centuries was wholly occupied? or, in other words—was not the Bible written for *one* purpose, and the books of the ancient church altogether for *another*, and an opposite purpose?

The uninitiated reader would probably take little account of so simple a phrase as "Assumption of the B. V. Mary," meeting his eye in his almanac; but there is a world of meaning involved in the words. This same feast of the Assumption, celebrated with so much pomp, as well in the western as the eastern church, set before the eyes of the people the fully-expanded blasphemy which had long been working itself out of the hot-bed of early superstition. In the solemnities of this impious festival the people were taught to look to the Queen of Heaven, as sitting upon a throne, highly exalted above the thrones, principalities, and powers of the upper world, and as having a name above every name,

and wielding a sceptre to which archangels bowed, and at the sight of which devils trembled. To this "exalted creature" they were to address their supplications; she being the fountain of all grace to sinful mortals, and the sole mediatrix between the church and her Son!

Who does not shudder in repeating these abominations? The pious reader would resent it as an injury, were I here to adduce the language of the principal church writers, from the fifth century downwards, on this head. Human audacity has never exceeded these enormities:—they were dictated by Hell in its high mockery of God and man. If Christianity be indeed fairly represented in the "solemnities," prayers, hymns, and pomps of the feast of the Assumption—let us go back to Judaism:—let us take refuge in Mahometism:—let us profess the pure theology of Plato!

A christian man, informed in church history, and knowing to what an extent of impiety the worship of the Virgin has gone, and especially how it has been crowned in the blasphemous pomps of the "Festival of the Assumption," would surely wish to keep himself altogether clear of any, even the most remote implication in these blackest horrors of superstition. Or let him herein take a lesson from the early Christians, who scrupled to take part in the most trivial civil observance that might be interpreted as implicating them in pagan rites. The writer already quoted, and who should be an authority in the present controversy, says —"our own church has set apart *only* such Festivals in honour of the Blessed Mary as may also be Festivals in honour of our Lord; the Purification, commemorating his presentation in the Temple, and the Annunciation, commemorating His incarnation."—(Newman's Sermons, vol. ii. p. 152.) The festival of the Assumption then, which has no (Scriptural) connexion with our Lord's history, and which embodies the very worst corruptions of the "fifth and sixth ages," is abandoned by Mr. Newman as "a popish superstition."

Not so the Editors of the Ecclesiastical Almanac,* who well knowing, what perhaps hundreds of the clergy barely surmise,

* The Ecclesiastical Almanac is affirmed by the best informed persons to have been issued under the auspices, and with the approval, of the writers of the Tracts for the Times—some say, compiled by themselves.

have included *this* Festival in *their* calendar, not merely *commending* it by "Black Letter," to the pious regards of "all Christians," but *recommending* it, by a special note, the phraseology of which, although the simple reader might not perceive it, carefully embraces each principal article of the ancient superstition. The Editors and their friends should think themselves bound in all candour to lay before the English public the *entire services and "solemnities"* of the Festival of the Assumption, as observed in the Eastern and the Western churches; and then plainly to say whether they approve these services, or condemn them.—

If they approve, and if they will distinctly say so, the church in which they minister should know how to deal with them.

If they disapprove, then how have they dared, in so momentous an instance, and so long, to conceal their disapprobation; nay to employ language which implies acquiescence?

Let the writers of the Oxford Tracts spread the documents touching this affair before the world; and favour us with their opinion thereupon, without ambiguity. If they profess that they want the leisure requisite for the purpose, there are those who would cheerfully undertake the labour; and they will then have nothing to do but to declare, in so many words, yea or nay, whether they think the "solemnities" of the festival of the Assumption to be "abominable idolatries," or edifying christian services. There can be no room in such an instance for a middle opinion.

CHRISTIANIZED DEMONOLATRY IN THE FOURTH CENTURY.

No reader of church history can require it to be proved that the various rites and usages on account of which the Romish and Greek church are usually impugned as idolatrous, by protestants, were openly practised, and were authorized by the heads of the church in the age of Gregory I. But when did these superstitions (if such we may account them) first make their appearance? It is superfluous to produce evidence of their existence and prevalence in the times *immediately* preceding those of Pope Gregory. Gregory of Tours, Leo I., Evagrius, Sozomen, Socrates, Theodoret, Isidore, Cyril of Alexandria, and many others, forbid the supposition that they, or any of their contemporaries, had been the *authors* of the opinions, or the usages, now in question. The men of that period did indeed give these superstitions a more distinct expression; and in various instances they amplified particular rites; yet only as a man clears and plants, and beautifies an inheritance, on which his ancestors had toiled in the same manner.

The only question which there can be any room to ask is this, —Whether the church of the *fourth* century—the nicene church, *invented*, or whether it *inherited* the superstitions it has transmitted. In reference to the conclusion toward which we are now tending, it is indifferent which of these suppositions we adopt. If the former, then we find a sufficient reason for denouncing the nicene divines as the most dangerous of guides. If the latter, then a case is made out conclusively against the hypothesis now before us.

At present then we are to inquire only concerning notions and rites prevalent during the fourth century. Very copious citations will not, I think, be demanded by intelligent and candid readers, who will duly estimate the value of the few to which I must confine myself. In the first instance, and that I may take the benefit of so high an authority, I shall offer (in abstract at least) the evidence on the ground of which bishop Newton did not hesitate heavily to inculpate the divines of this period as the authors, or the promoters of idolatry.* I shall take the bishop's text as it stands, sentence by sentence, subjoining a sample or two of each of the passages to which he refers. He introduces this part of his argument by saying—

"It is certain that the monks had the principal share in promoting and propagating the worship of the dead; and either out of credulity, or for worse reasons, recommended it to the people with all the pomp and power of their eloquence, in their homilies and orations. Read only some of the most celebrated Fathers:—

—"Read the orations of Basil on the martyr Mamas, and on the forty Martyrs."

The illustrious preacher and bishop of Cæsarea, beholding a vast assemblage before him, gathered around the shrine of the martyr, consoles himself under the consciousness of his inability to do justice to his great subject, or to satisfy the expectations of his hearers, in the thought that they were able, without his aid, to make up the saint's commemorative eulogium by merely recounting the benefits, spiritual and temporal, which they had severally received from his hands. Mamas, a shepherd of Cappadocia, had suffered about the year 275; churches had been built to his honour, and, as it appears, he had come in these provinces to be as much importuned as was St. Lawrence at Milan, or St. Januarius at Naples, being one of the dii majores of the Greek church; nor was there any sort of aid he would not render to his favoured votaries. In explanation of Basil's allusions, it should be observed that a principal function of these divinities was to discover lost or stolen goods, in dreams, to those who had occasion to seek such information at their hands.

* Some passages of Newton's 23d Dissertation will be found in the Supplement, pp. iii. iv. v.

Memores estote martyris, quotquot illo per somnia potiti estis; quotquot in hoc loco constituti, adjutorem ipsum ad precandum habuistis; quibuscunque ex nomine advocatus ipsis adfuit operibus: quotquot aberrantes, ad viam reduxit, quoscunque sanitati restituit, quibuscunque filios jam mortuos, ad vitam reductos reddidit, quotquot vitæ terminos prorogavit—προθεσμίας βίου μακροτέρας ἐποίησεν. Collectis in unum his omnibus, ex communi symbolo, martyri encomium construite. Tom. i. p. 595.

That is to say, the populace of Cæsarea *would* have their holidays; not much cared whether an old god or a new saint gave a name to the customary festivities. But a mere holiday was not enough:—they must have a divinity to look to when at home;—one who could and would help them, and serve their turns in all sorts of occasions on which devout folks are wont to run to their gods. The indulgent church acceded to *both* these demands—exacting only this reasonable condition, that the people should come to church, and listen to a half-hour's harangue during the morning of the saint's festival. The chiefs of this compliant church were none other than "the wise and good men, much wiser than you or I, who lived fifteen hundred years ago," and to whom "we ought to appeal, whenever we want to know what is good or evil." But let us attend to the facts expressed or implied in this notable passage. In the middle of the fourth century we find that the people were in the custom of assembling to celebrate the festival of a martyr, to whom also they were, and had long been, as it seems, in the habit of addressing their petitions, precisely in the manner in which the people of Italy, Spain, and Ireland, at this day supplicate the aid of their saints. This practice, formally recognised by the greatest and most spiritual man of the times, is by him solemnly approved;—no single word of caution being administered as a guard against the abuses to which so dangerous a superstition was liable;—and at the same time the people are reminded of the many miraculous benefits which they were conscious of having received, as the reward of this their devotion to Saint Mamas! Some had had their own health restored by his means:—some the lives of their children:—some had obtained an extension of the term of their own lives:—some had recovered their goods:—some had been guided in penetrating the wilderness.

A single citation of this sort the reader might look at in perplexity, hesitating to draw the inference it plainly suggests. But what can he do, when scores of instances, and many of them even less ambiguous, if possible, than this one, are offered to his examination, and all drawn from the same age?

We do not now ask whether the practice of praying to the saints for life, health, preservation, recovery of property, be good; or whether it be one of the "apostolic traditions" which we should thankfully accept at the hands of the nicene Fathers;—but only this, whether there be any reason and consistency in the conduct of those who, in one breath, are designating the MODERN people of Southern Europe as "really idolaters," and sending us to learn our Christianity, without privilege of doubt (for "to doubt is a sin") from the writers who have sent down this same worship of the saints, backed with their high sanction, through "*fifteen hundred years*"?

But we follow the track of our learned guide another step:—"Read," says bishop Newton, "Basil's oration on the Forty Martyrs." These were so many soldiers, who, at Sebaste, in Armenia, had suffered with great constancy, under Licinius, so late as the year 320. Let the reader of the following and similar passages especially bear it in mind that they offer two distinct elements of evidence; *first* the preacher's style, from which, although we were to set off much as the mere flourish of the orator, there would remain the pernicious influence of this extravagance upon the popular mind; and *secondly*, which is of more significance, his distinct allusions to, and implied or expressed approval of, *the then long established custom* of addressing petitions directly to the dead. If *then*, the people were sometimes reminded that "it is God who hears and answers prayer," so, not less distinctly, are the people in Catholic countries now cautioned:—nevertheless, under this training they actually become idolaters. A magnificent church had been erected at Cæsarea, in honour of the Forty Martyrs, and in which had been treasured some particles of their inestimable dust, to which the people were accustomed to crowd, under direction of their priests, for obtaining cures and deliverances. A citation from Evagrius, hereafter to be given, will show that the course of ages has done very little to change the

aspect of these scenes of fraud and delusion. But now for St. Basil.

Paratum est hic Christianis auxilium· βοήθεια, Ecclesia videlicet martyrum, exercitus triumphantium, chorus laudantium Deum. Sæpe operam dedistis, sæpe laborastis ut unum pro vobis orantem inveniretis: quadraginta sunt hi, unam orationis emittentes vocem. Ubi enim sunt duo vel tres in nomine Domini congregati, ibi Deus est. Ubi vero quadraginta fuerint, quis dubitet Deum esse præsentem? Qui aliqua premitur angustia, ad hos confugit— ὁ θλιβόμενος, ἐπὶ τοὺς τεσσαράκοντα καταφεύγει· qui rursus lætatur, ad hos recurrit. Hic ut a malis liberetur, ille ut duret in rebus lætis. Hic mulier orans pro filiis auditur, peregrinanti viro reditum incolumem, ægrotanti vero salutem implorat. Cum his ergo martyribus nostras effundamus preces.—Tom. i. p. 533.

The doctors of the church in every age have thought it needful to bring in a saving clause of this sort; with what effect all experience shows. The *people* instead of praying to God *with* the saints, invariably pray *to* them. Basil thus apostrophizes the Forty:—

O sanctum chorum, o sacrum ordinem, o cuneum inexpugnabilem, o communes generis humani custodes, optimi curarum socii, precum ac votorum invicem suffragatores, legati apud Deum potentissimi, astra mundi, flores ecclesiarum, ut ego quidem ausim affirmare, intelligibiles et sensibiles, vos non terra contexit sed cœlum excepit!

Duly to estimate the "wisdom" of the Christian orators who thus addressed a crowd of lately converted pagans (if converted in any sense) we must imagine the very same language to be now addressed to the populace of Benares, Madras, or Calcutta, who having at length seen their interest in professing the religion of their masters, should be told to renounce indeed the gods of their ancestors, but to have recourse, instead, to those lately departed servants of God who had fallen victims in the early attempt to christianize India—to Schwartz, Martyn, Corry, Carey, Heber!

"Oh! holy quire! oh! sacred band! oh! unconquerable phalanx! oh! *common guardians of the human family!*, Kind participants of our cares! helpers of our prayers! most potent advocates (ambassadors). Stars of the world! Flowers of the churches!"

Such was the christian discretion with which the "wise men who lived fifteen hundred years ago," guided the lately and still pagan populace committed to their care!

"Read," says bishop Newton, "the orations of Ephraim Syrus on the death of Basil."

The evidence furnished by this eminently devout writer, touching our immediate subject, is so considerable in its extent, so decisive in its character, and of so much weight, as indicative of the opinions and ritual usages of the ancient oriental church, that I am unwilling to diminish the effect it is adapted to make on christian minds, by presenting only a few insulated passages gathered from the mass. A large portion of this father's writings having reached our times in their original language—Syriac, and being therefore exempt from the suspicion of any tampering on the part of church authorities, they carry a peculiar value, as unimpeachable evidence on all points of ancient doctrine, discipline, and worship. On the testimony of this writer *alone* might safely be rested the question concerning the real quality of the religion of the fourth century. Being fortunately possessed of the now rare and sumptuous edition, printed at Rome, in six folios, 1732—1743, I shall hope to find opportunity for laying the ample evidence it contains, on various points, before the reader. There is nothing that has been affirmed in these numbers that may not be made good by the testimony of Ephraim Syrus.

The mere invocation of the Saints might seem little more than an ill-considered bombast in the orator, if it were not shown to mean much more by the universal practice of the people, who, with the licence of their teachers, were used to implore the aid of these *divi* in the most unambiguous manner. These invocations moreover are even less offensive than the encomiums in the midst of which they appear, and which are adulatory in a degree utterly incompatible with christian simplicity.

"Read the oration of Gregory Nazianzen on Athanasius." Our learned author must be understood to say, "read the entire oration;" for in fact, even if the impiety with which it concludes were exscinded, adulation so enormous could not fail to corrupt the minds of the people, and to seduce them from the great principles of those Scriptures "which were written, not to exalt

this or that particular Saint, but to do honour to Almighty God."

At o charum et sacrum Caput, tu, inquam (Athanasius) . . . Nos autem utinam ipse benignus desuper et placidus aspicias, ἐποπτεύοις ἱλέως, atque hunc populum gubernes . . . Meque, siquidem res pacatæ futuræ sint, in vita teneas, gregemque mecum pascas; sin autem Ecclesia bellis flagratura est, reducas, aut assumas, tecumque et cum tui similibus, colloces, tametsi magnum sit quod postulo.—Tom. i. p. 397.

The popular sense attributed to this impiety is not to be understood, unless we remember that at the very time the mass of the people—called christians, were seeking succour from the saints in heaven on the commonest occasions. Far therefore from regarding a prayer to a departed saint or martyr as a mere figure of rhetoric,* they could hold it to be nothing less than a pattern for their own devotions. And even if their bishop might retain a recollection of the essence of true prayer, *they* would generally yield themselves to that blind impulse of our nature, which in every clime and age has hurried mankind into polytheism and demonolatry.

"Read the oration" (of Gregory Nazianzen) "on Basil."

The peroration, in this instance, is almost identical with the one just cited, and suggests only the same dangerous consequence.

"Read the oration on Cyprian."

It was the preacher's consolation on this occasion that, unequal as he might be to the task assigned him, he was about to pronounce the praises of an indulgent power, who would overlook his deficiencies. Great minded and philosophic as was the martyr-bishop, he would readily pardon all imperfections—οἶδ' ὅτι συγγνώσεται ἡμῖν. . . To the incident with which Gregory opens his panegyric, I have already had occasion to refer;† but it here carries an inference which should be particularly noted. I must therefore ask leave for a few words of repetition. Cyprian, before his conversion, says Gregory, had become passionately enamoured

* Mr. Faber, in his "Difficulties of Romanism," seems willing to interpret these passages from the Nicene divines, as if they were mere apostrophes. But why not thus understand similar invocations occurring in Romanist writers? The reason in either case is, that the mass of the people, *with the knowledge and approval of their teachers*, actually paid religious homage to the saints.

† Vol. I. p. 205.

of a beautiful nun, whom he pursued with importunities which threw her into despair. Where, or from whom should she seek protection?—from Heaven itself, no doubt! but this was not enough. She supplicated the Virgin Mary to succour a virgin in distress, while, by the most severe penances, she sought at once to deform her beauty and to propitiate the divine mercy. Hæc atque his plura commemorans, Virginemque Mariam supplex obsecrans, ut periclitanti virgini suppetias ferret, jejunii et chameuniæ pharmaco sese communit, partim ut formæ venustatem tanquam insidiosam obscuraret, etc.—partim ut per sui afflictionem propitium sibi Deum et exorabilem redderet.—Tom. i. p. 279.

This profane stuff (howbeit drawn from the pages of a "wise man, wiser than you or I or any of us") one would scorn to cite, did it not come in evidence in a controversy which forbids our being very nice. The foolish legend had either descended from an earlier age, or it was the invention of Gregory's time (probably his own coinage for the occasion). If ancient—then it carries up the proof of this species of impiety to a remote antiquity, and so involves other elements of early christianity in the gravest suspicion; but whether it be ancient, or more recent, the telling such a story, by such a man, on such an occasion, shows what the people were then used to. If no such practice as that of praying to the Virgin Mary had ever been heard of, could a bishop have dared to advance so astounding a novelty? It is manifest that the ears of the people had already been made familiar with tales of this quality, and that they themselves were in the habit of doing what their teachers thus allowed and recommended. In a word, the worship of the Virgin and the saints was, in the fourth century, mainly what it has been through so long a course of time—the favourite delusion of besotted and misguided nations.

What follows agrees well with this beginning. The "old wife's fable" about Cyprian's remains I have already referred to,* but must here cite what was in that place omitted, namely, Gregory's affirmation concerning the miraculous virtues of these relics. Our question is, Who originated those notions and practices which, when they meet us in Italy, or Ireland, we are compelled to condemn as idolatrous? The sending the common people to shrines,

* Vol. I. p. 207.

there to obtain miraculous cures, has never had any other effect than that of debauching every genuine religious sentiment; and of reducing, at the same time, the sacerdotal guardians of such shrines to the lowest condition of mercenary hypocrisy. Has it not ever been so? But who were the guilty authors of these debasing superstitions?

Cyprian's body could not be found—num scilicet hoc damno angeremur, acerbeque ferremus nos sacrosanctis reliquiis privari: but at length, lest the church should too long suffer so grievous a privation, the body was discovered δι' ἀποκαλύψεως, and the benefits thence accruing were laid open to all christians. In fact, a magnificent shrine long attracted pilgrims to Carthage, from all quarters of christendom. What these benefits were, the preacher professes his inability duly to set forth; but happily his hearers could supply the deficiency. "What remained it was for them to add, as an offering on their part made to the martyr." Dæmonum nimirum oppressionem, morborum depulsionem, futurarum rerum prænotionem (let the reader mark the words, τὴν τοῦ μέλλοντος πρόγνωσιν) quæ quidem omnia vel cineres ipsi Cypriani, *modo fides adsit*, efficiunt: quemadmodum norunt, qui hujus rei periculum fecerunt, ac miraculum ad nos usque transmiserunt, ejusdemque memoriam posteris quoque tradituri sunt.

The most pernicious branch of these ancient frauds would naturally be that of the fortune-telling function of the Relics. The dangerous impatience of the human mind to penetrate futurity becomes a sort of mania, when stimulated by alliance with other powerful emotions. But what are the ministers of such a shrine likely to become, who find themselves daily importuned by crowds, to lift for them the veil of the future? Will such men long be scrupulous, or will they be able to keep clean hands? Or will not the office quickly come under the management of thorough-going knaves? After thus inciting the people to give themselves to these delusions, the preacher's following admonitions to imitate the martyr's virtues could be of little avail, or absolutely of none. It is a matter of course that he should conclude with a passionate address to the Divus, beseeching his favour and help.—At tu nos e cœlo benignus aspicias!

"Read the oration of Gregory Nyssen on Ephraim Syrus."

The bombast of this father when he has a "Saint" to glorify overleaps all bounds. The "holy Ephraim" is to be lifted aloft, that the whole world may gaze upon the resplendent full-orbed glories of his virtue. Ὁ μέγας Πατὴρ ἡμῶν, had he found a more discreet eulogist, might have appeared to far more advantage in the eyes of posterity. The reader resents an adulation offered to the Dead which, according to the notions of those from whose lips it came, resembled much the sycophancy of a hungry expectant. The professed purport of the orator's task is, ut populo clare constet, nostrum hunc, aut verius universæ Ecclesiæ Doctorem, S. Ephraim, ad supremum gradum in spiritali virtutum scala pervenisse.

Had it been indeed a god he was celebrating, the orator could hardly have found loftier language than that in which he invokes, and labours to propitiate his Saint. The reader will observe, not merely Gregory Nyssen's extravagance, but the reference to a fact which illustrates the *then common practice* of imploring help from a Saint, precisely in the manner usual with the people now in roman catholic countries. Any translation I might attempt of this passage would be suspected of exaggeration.

Hæc sunt, quæ tibi, Patrum optime, mundique Doctor clarissime, laudum præconia *audax lingua*, ut vilia munuscula, offert: non ea quidem pro dignitate, neque ut indigenti tibi: (quam enim afferre queat gloriam oratio, quæ laudati meritis plane superatur?) verum propter viventium potius utilitatem; nam bonorum atque præstantiorum virorum encomia, maximam plerisque consolationem et cohortationem ad meliora adferunt. Hanc vero laudandi provinciam alacrius suscepimus, cum variis aliis adducti rationibus, præter vitæ doctrinæque tuæ famam, toto terrarum orbe celeberrimam, tum *cura illa*, ἡ θαυμαστή σου ἐπισασία, quam in homine ejusdem nominis *liberando adhibuisti*. Ille siquidem nos ad subeundum hoc onus impulit, qui a posteris Ismael in bello captus, et longius a patria diu commoratus, cum jam ad eam redire desideraret, viamque commodam ignoraret, *singulari ope tua*, τῆς σῆς ἔτυχε παραδόξου ἐπισασίας, aptam ad salutem rationem invenit, et quod diu concupiverat, adeptus est. Cum enim in maximum vitæ discrimen adductus esset (quod omnes viæ barbarorum interclusæ copiis tenerentur) *te nomine duntaxat invocavit*,

dicens, Sancte Ephraim, succurre mihi, ἄγιε Ἐφραὶμ, βοήθει μοι. (Hibernice—" Holy Saint Patrick, help me!") Sicque tuto periculorum laqueos evasit, ac mortis metum neglexit; inopinatamque consecutus salutem, patriæ, *tuo munitus præsidio*, ὑπὸ τῆς σῆς προνοίας φρουρούμενος, præter spem est restitutus. Quare ad ista enarranda audacius aggressi, *laudes tuas impuris attingere labiis, non sumus veriti.* Qua quidem in re, si quid profecerimus, id tuo nos adsecutos auxilio fatebimur, tibique acceptum feremus: sin vero *tua dignitate* multo inferiores sint nostræ laudationes, te quoque (licet forte audacius hoc dictum videatur) in caussa fuisse dicemus, qui et vivens *et defunctus* modestiæ humilitatisque studio, te collaudare cupientes impedis. Veruntamen, sive istud sit, sive illud, nos quantum tulerunt vires, pietatis officio satisfecimus; teque hoc ipsum minime nobis succensurum, *neque tui* amantissimos *aversurum;* verum æquo benevoloque animo filiorum balbutientium laudes admissurum, confidimus. Tu autem divino jam adsistens altari, vitæque principi ac sanctissimæ una cum angelis sacrificans Trinitati, omnium nostrum memineris, *veniamque* nobis peccatorum impetra, ut sempiterna cœlestis regni beatitudine perfrui possimus. In Christo Jesu Domino nostro; Cui gloria, &c.—Tom. ii. p. 1047.

We must here take breath awhile, and carefully gather up the import of this signal passage. In the name of all idolaters, ancient or modern, classic or barbarian, pagan or popish, let justice, and nothing more or less, take its course upon this christian father. As to papists, and whom when we catch them at their devotions, we protestants, even the most indulgent of us, are compelled to call idolaters, there is no shadow of difference, either in form or substance, between Gregory Nyssen, and the most thoroughgoing Saint-worshipper of the middle ages, or of our own times. These latter have been as good trinitarians as he, and have been as ready as he to insist upon those distinctions and reserves concerning *latria, dulium, hyperdulium,* by means of which the imputation of flagrant idolatry has been evaded. But, as every one knows, neither Gregory Nyssen's hearers, nor Dr. Wiseman's, have been used to give the least heed to any such refinements: on the contrary, trusting themselves to the guidance of their teachers, they have, with the confidence of

urgent want or woe, betaken themselves to "their gods." On every occasion when some common danger has threatened the lives of many such worshippers, every one has said to his fellow—"Arise *thou*, and call upon *thy* god; for if one be not at hand, or in mood to help us, another may." One invokes Saint Joseph, another Saint Patrick, another the Blessed Virgin, another Saint Ephraim; and when deliverance has been happily obtained, one points to another, and says "This poor man cried, and his god heard him, and delivered him from his fears!"

It may be pretended that the passage we have cited is nothing more than a rhetorical apostrophe, not very wise perhaps, but yet not heavily culpable. Such an extenuation is absolutely excluded, as well by the reasons above-mentioned, as by this, that this catholic doctor being one of the most noted and orthodox of those "wise men" whose peerless wisdom is to be our stay in all questions concerning truth and error, we are not at liberty to impute to such an authority a folly (if it be a folly) of the most extreme sort; and if this be a folly, then it attaches to *every one* of the "wise men" of that age of wisdom! In what a maze do we find ourselves entangled, if those from whose judgment there is no appeal, yet stand liable to an imputation of the most dangerous species of folly! If this worship of the dead, if this formal recommendation of the practice of seeking deliverance directly from a demon, be a folly, it is the folly of a "deceived heart," and of those who have been judicially "given over to believe a lie."

But, as we have said, we cannot admit this extenuation, in this instance, because the invocation of the saint, even if, by much indulgence, it might in itself be allowed to pass as a rhapsodical apostrophe, is fixed in its worst sense by the circumstances attending its delivery. I request the reader to weigh the terms, and to consider the real import of the passage as listened to by a credulous crowd. The orator, in bringing his panegyric to a close, looks to the heavens, and addressing the saint, implores his indulgent acceptance of the unworthy praises with which he, "a man of unclean lips," had dared to approach his seat of glory: if he had been in any measure successful in weaving this chaplet of honour it was by aid received from the saint:—if however he had failed it had been because this saint had, in modesty, thrown impedi-

ments in his way! Be that as it might, he meekly deprecates the saint's displeasure, and beseeches his continued favour! and especially asks that, through his intervention, he might obtain the pardon of his sins! All this however might still seem a little vague: to remove every doubt therefore, as to what the people were to understand, and in what way they were to benefit themselves by the celestial patrocinium, thus exhibited, the orator mentions a case of the saint's gracious interposition in rescuing a captive from imminent peril, and in restoring him to his home. The unfortunate man, in the depth of his despair, having been taught where to look for help in trouble (such is the benefit of early instruction from a church which never errs) lifts his eyes to heaven, and exclaims "Αγιε Εφραὶμ Βοήθει μοι, nor was his hope deceived:—the saint was at that moment neither sleeping, nor on a journey, nor otherwise occupied:—fortunately he was at leisure, and in a propitious mood;—and he sent the suppliant the relief he implored!* Happy the people who have gods so potent and so gracious! Happy the people whose teachers know how to send them, at once, to the "most good-natured folks," in the skies! Alas for protestants who, in a wilful moment renounced all these benefits, and threw contempt upon the gods of their ancestors! Is it any wonder that things have gone so ill in all protestant countries, these three hundred years past? Is it not high time that we should return, penitently, and with offerings of peace, to the benign powers who, with so much advantage, were worshipped by the "wise men that lived fifteen hundred years ago!" We return to our guide.

* It appears to have been not unusual, in that age, for the divi of the church to afford to their votaries this particular species of aid—deliverance from captivity. The simple-hearted Nilus—the disciple of Chrysostom, mentions an instance of which he had personal knowledge, and in doing so he points out the singular advantage that resulted from the practice of exposing the likenesses of the Martyrs and Saints, in picture and sculpture, to the eyes of the faithful; by which means, when these cœlicoles vouchsafed to make themselves apparent to their suppliants (as frequently happened) they might easily be recognized. Thus the danger would be avoided of attributing to St. Joseph or St. Basil, a deliverance which had been effected, in truth, by St. Nicholas. The epistle in which this story is given, Epist. lxii. lib. iv. is, it seems, together with the preceding one, appended to the epistles of Nilus, being cited as his in the Acts of the second council of Nice (for restoring images). If any doubt attaches to it on this ground, one would gladly give so good a man the benefit thence accruing.

" Read," says Bishop Newton, " the same Doctor's oration on the martyr Theodorus."

I much regret that my limits forbid my presenting this remarkable oration entire; describing as it does, with peculiar distinctness, the religion of the time, as well in its characteristic sentiments, as in its visible adjuncts. Those who, having no hypothesis to defend, calmly wish to know what antiquity really was, will read it for themselves; and having done so, let such readers tell whoever will hear them, that the Christianity of the fourth century differed (for the better) in no important points, from the modern papacy of popish countries.

" What was it," asks the preacher, " that had called together a vast assemblage from town and country in the depth of winter, (February 7th) and all intent as upon the most momentous business?

It was the Chief of the " Megalomartyrs," or Dii Selecti, who had convoked this crowd of christian people, with the blast of his peaceful bugle, and invited them to meet around the " habitation of his repose." " Under the saint's own direction," says Butler; " his relicks were translated, soon after his death, to Euchaia in Pontus. This town became so famous for his shrine, that the name of Theodoropolis was given it; and out of devotion to their saint, pilgrims resorted thither from all parts of the east, as appears from the " Spiritual Meadow" of Zonaras and Cedrenus. The two latter historians relate that the emperor John I., surnamed Zemisces, about the year 970, ascribed a great victory which he gained over the Saracens, to the patronage of this martyr; and in thanksgiving, rebuilt, in a stately manner, the church where his relicks were deposited at Euchaitæ." Feb. 7th.

But does our Gregory give any countenance to arrant popery like this?

— It was the Martyr Theodorus who had called the people together. Even HE who, as we believe, in the preceding year, had brunted the Scythian storm—repelling the terrible host of barbarians, not by sword or spear, but by the propulsive and omnipotent Cross of Christ!—such then is the pure service in which we, the votaries and ministers of the martyr are engaged, *τῆς καθαρᾶς ταύτης θρησκείας ὑπηρέται* . . . . . As to the remains of

the vulgar dead, they are loathsome and vile; but far otherwise is it with the relics of the martyrs, which, with many honours, and much devotion, are carefully deposited in a sacred and goodly shrine, as an inestimable treasure, kept until the times of regeneration, and endowed with qualities not belonging to other mortal remains. From the sepulchres of the dead we avert our steps;—not so when we approach a place such as that in which we are now assembled; for first the eye delights itself in the magnificence and rich decorations of this spacious Temple, upon which the carver, the sculptor, the painter, have exhausted the resources of their respective arts, and where the acts of the martyr himself are vividly depicted, and where is the very image of this athlete of Christ τὸ ἐκτύπωμα (bas-relief) and where all these objects in varied colours, address the mind—a pictured book. Nor do the walls alone of this Temple read us lessons of piety; for the very pavement, in its mosaics, like a flowery mead, promotes our instruction.—But what shall we say of the shrine itself?*

I will not, in what follows, charge myself with any other responsibility than that of transcribing the latin version, which, whether better or worse in itself, was at least made with no view to the present argument. Let every phrase be considered with a view to a comparison between the piety of the fourth century, and that of later times. The tridentine Fathers say no more than this—Sanctorum quoque martyrum, et aliorum cum Christo viventium sancta corpora, quæ viva membra fuerunt Christi, et templum Spiritus Sancti, ab ipso ad æternam vitam suscitanda et glorificanda, à fidelibus veneranda esse, *per quæ multa beneficia à Deo hominibus præstantur*, &c.: and again—docentes eos (fideles) Sanctos una cum Christo regnantes, orationes suas pro hominibus Deo offerre: bonum atque utile esse suppliciter eos invocare et ob beneficia impetranda a Deo per Filium, &c.—and they subjoin cautions and limitations which, if any thing could, might repress or exclude the abuse of so dangerous a license. But, on the

* In what style the pavements of the christian temples of Rome and Italy, at a very early period, were adorned with mosaics, may be seen in the Vetera Monimenta of Ciampinus—a collection which throws light upon many subjects of christian antiquity. That the churches of the East were not deficient in these and other decorations, may be inferred from various testimonies, as well as that of Gregory, to some of which we may refer hereafter.

ground of these very decisions of the Romish Church, those practices are maintained, in all Roman Catholic countries, which, when we actually behold them, we scruple not to designate as idolatrous. Now, does Gregory Nyssen, or do any of his illustrious contemporaries say any thing on these points, which can, in a practical sense, be distinguished from the language of the Council of Trent?

His igitur arte laboratis operibus quæ sensui exposita sunt, ubi oculos oblectavit, cupit deinceps etiam ipsi conditorio appropinquare, sanctificationem ac benedictionem, contrectationem, *τὴν ἐπάφην*, ejus esse credens; quod si quis etiam pulverem, quo conditorium, ubi martyris corpus quiescit, obsitum est, auferre permittat, pro munere pulvis accipitur, ac tanquam res magni pretii condenda terra colligitur. Nam ipsas attingere reliquias, si quando aliqua ejusmodi prospera fortuna contingat, ut id facere liceat, quam id sit multum desiderandum et optandum, ac summarum precum donum, *sciunt experti*, et ejus desiderii compotes facti. Quasi corpus enim per se vivens et florens, qui intuentur, amplectuntur, oculis, ori, auribus, sensuum instrumentis adhibentes, deinde officii et affectioni lacrymas martyri, quasi integer esset et appareret, superfundentes, ut pro ipsis deprecator intercedat, supplices preces offerunt tanquam Satellitem Dei orantes, quasi accipientem dona cum velit, invocantes.

The orator then narrates the martyrdom of Theodorus, who (a fact Butler omits) had signalized his zeal against paganism by setting fire to the temple of "the mother of the gods," which stood in the midst of the city. After suffering with unshaken constancy, he departed, and, says the preacher—

Nobis vero memoriam certaminis pro doctrina reliquit, populos congregans, Ecclesiam erudiens, dæmonas arcens et fugans, angelos pacificos reducens, rogans a Deo pro nobis utilia, *variorum morborum medicinæ* OFFICINAM *hunc locum efficiens*, portum eorum qui afflictionum tempestatibus jactantur, pauperum abundans et copiosum ærarium, viatorum quietum diversorium, locum celebrem conventus, ac dies festos continenter agentium. Etsi enim anniversariis feriis hunc diem celebramus; *at nunquam cessat studiose advenientium multitudo*, ac formicarum similitudinem servat ea, quæ huc pertinet via publica, cum alii quidem ascendant, alii vero venientibus cedant.

One cannot but wonder that the orator who so industriously enumerates the manifold benefits conferred upon the church and people, and the whole world, by the Martyr, observes a profound silence as to a principal adjunct of this spiritual Dispensary. The Martyr, he says, had made the Church dedicated to his honour a "medicine shop" for the cure of all sorts of disorders; as well as a "harbour," an "inn," "a treasury", and what not; and he affirms that, in consequence, the holy place was thronged, not only on the saint's holiday; but that *every day* the road leading to it resembled the path to an ant-hill, filled by a perpetual stream of eager comers and goers! But were there no ministers attendant upon this shrine? were there no dealers in these panaceas? were there none to give responses and none to accept votive offerings? I dare to surmise that this branch of the establishment had not been forgotten. I dare to believe that the priests of the Megalomartyr Theodorus were wise in their generation. A citation from Evagrius, if I find room for it, will clear up a little of the mystery (if indeed there be any mystery) attaching to ancient catholic usages in this particular.*

But we have not done with the chief actor in this scene—orator Gregory. Let what follows be read as if it were a document of history, far removed from connexion with any and every existing interest or controversy.

It should be observed that later, and romanist writers, when pressed by the objection that the saints, not being either omniscient, or endowed with ubiquity, could not be supposed *always* to hear the prayers of their votaries—have offered a *philosophical* solution of the difficulty, and one which must fairly be held to abate a little the absurdities of the practice of praying to them. Thus the eminent Peter Dens—

Obj. Sancti non cognoscunt preces nostras; ergo frustra invocantur.

* The very ancient custom of sending costly offerings to the fanes of the gods of *distant countries*, and by which means the more noted temples became depositories of incredible wealth, continued in force after the christian Saints and Martyrs had taken the place of the gods of paganism. Evagrius, lib. vi. c. 21, relates that Chosroes, in fulfilment of a vow to that effect, had sent a massive golden cross to the shrine of the Martyr Sergius, in acknowledgment of gracious aid by him afforded. The light in which these superstitions were regarded by those who looked at them from a remote position, shows what practically they were, i.e.—gross instances of polytheism.

R. neg. antec. Quia Sancti omnia cognoscunt in Verbo, quæ ad eorum statum pertinent, adeoque preces nostras ad eos directas, *vident in Verbo*, sive in Deo tanquam in speculo omnia continente, sicuti Angeli preces nostras cognoscunt. Theologia, tom. v. p. 12.

Many explanations to the same effect might be cited. But not so Gregory Nyssen. This sort of high abstraction would not have satisfied the imaginations of the eager crowd before him; and in anticipating the obvious objection of some caviller, or of some sufferer, who perhaps was whispering a comfortless surmise, "Perhaps the saint is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked;" he says, No! no! banish the unworthy suspicion—can we impute to our divinity so ungracious, so uncourteous a mode of behaviour as not to be present *in his own fane*, on *his own commemoration day?* Who could believe it? Is there a god so morose? certainly not the Megolomartyr Theodorus!

Tu vero (o beate) huc jam ades ad nos, *ubicumque tandem fueris*, ut diei festo præsis: *vocantem enim te, contra vocamus;* ac sive in sublimi æthere habitas, sive per cœlestem aliquem circulum versaris, aut in choros angelorum cooptatus Domino adsistis, aut cum virtutibus et potestatibus, ut servus fidelis adorationis officio fungeris: *parumper* ab iis officiis vacationem deprecatus, *veni ad hos qui te honorant*, invisibilis amicus; cognosce ac vise ferias, quæ celebrantur, ut gratiarum adversus Deum conduplices actionem . . Multorum beneficiorum indigemus, intercede ac deprecare pro patria apud communem regem et Dominum . . . timemus afflictiones, expectamus pericula; non longe absunt scelesti Scythæ bellum adversum nos parturientes: ut miles propugna (pro nobis) ut martyr pro conservis *utere libertate loquendi.* Etiamsi superasti seculum: at nosti affectus et usus necessitatesque humanæ conditionis; pete pacem ut hi publici conventus non desinant . . . . Nos enim etiam, quod incolumes et integri conservati sumus, tibi beneficium acceptum referimus. Petimus autem etiam futuri temporis præsidium atque securitatem. Quod si majori etiam opus fuerit advocatione ac deprecatione (do not take it as a slight) fratrum tuorum martyrum coge chorum: et cum omnibus una deprecare, multorum justorum preces multitudinum ac populorum peccata luant: *admone Petrum, excita Paulum*, Joannem item theologum ac discipulum dilectum, ut pro ecclesiis

. . . sed virtute tuæ sociorumque tuorum deprecationis τῇ δυνάμει τῆς σῆς πρεσβείας, καὶ τῶν σὺν σοὶ, θαυμαστὲ καὶ ὑπερλάμπον . . .

Those who are at all conversant with the scenes of antiquity will not find it difficult to bring before their imagination *this* remarkable scene, and they will feel that the orator's harangue must have had an effect of the most powerful kind upon those who listened to it. A spacious and richly decorated temple, the walls and pavements of which glowed with sacred subjects, was crowded to suffocation with a confluence of persons of all ranks, drawn from the surrounding region, far and near. The ministers of this temple, in their richest attire, stood mute before, or moved in solemn procession up to, and around the sacred shrine which hid from the eye the wonder-working dust of the martyr, whose image or likeness, resplendent with the brightest pigments and jewels, and high raised, seemed benignly to welcome the awe-stricken multitude. At the same time a recent public danger, confidently believed to have been averted by the saint's intervention, and also an expected calamity, from which, it was hoped, he would deliver his votaries, stimulated to the utmost the fears and hopes of all. The orator comes forward, and charming the ear with his flow of words, and touching the deepest passions of the public mind, and appealing to the sorrows, the wants, the woes of individuals, at length, and in the style of the fullest assurance, invokes the PRESENT DIVINITY—passionately implores his interposition, in behalf of his trembling country—his church—his humble suitors, each and all!—all are prostrate upon the pictured pavement—all eyes are raised toward the image of the patron and advocate;—all voices join in the acclamation—"O holy and blessed Theodorus, help us!" Such was catholic antiquity!

"Read," says Bishop Newton, "the orations of Chrysostom, and you will be greatly astonished to find how full they are of this sort of superstition, what powers and miracles are ascribed to the saints, what prayers and praises are offered to them!"

The evidence, on this point, furnished by Chrysostom's writings, (including none to which any definite critical doubt attaches) is ample, unambiguous, and, in the various forms of affirmation, and incidental illusion, is scattered over a very wide surface. Even if this evidence does not substantiate *more* than

what may be gathered from other sources, it carries with it a peculiar weight. Whatever may be thought of the honesty of some of his distinguished contemporaries, and how much soever he himself may have been tainted by the vicious principles of the age in which he lived, it is impossible not to think of *him* as sincere, as well as fervent in his piety. He proves himself, moreover, to have possessed an extensive, and we might say, an intimate acquaintance with the inspired writings; and far from attempting to supersede their authority, or to thrust them into the background, as is done by modern romanists, and by the Oxford Tract writers, he appeals to them as the unique, ultimate, and sufficient rule of faith; and is most copious and animated in commending them to the perusal of the laity.

Now inasmuch as the degrading superstitions with which we have now to do, not only receive no warrant from the Scriptures, but are sternly condemned by them, it passes the utmost bounds of credibility to imagine that a man like Chrysostom could, without question or remark, have seen errors so gross springing up *fresh* about him; or that, if recent, he could have fallen in with them, and promoted them zealously, as in fact he does. On no other supposition can we understand this great writer's approval of this corrupt system, than that of its high antiquity (in his time). He must have been bred in the midst of it: it must have acquired over his mind all the authority of immemorial prescription; it must have received the warrant, not only of established and universal custom, but of the explicit assent of the most venerable teachers. I do not see how it is possible to read the passages now to be cited (and there are very many of like import) and not believe that the entire church had *long* abandoned itself to these enormities, at the period of Chrysostom's ministrations.

Some momentous consequences attach to the supposition which we adopt in relation to Chrysostom's testimony concerning the points now before us: the reader's especial attention is therefore invited to the passages presently to be adduced, and which will, I think, put beyond doubt

1. Chrysostom's personal and cordial approval of demonolatrous worship.

2. The universality of these superstitions;—or the fact that the christianized people of the fourth century practised, in these

respects, whatever is now characteristic of the greek and romish communions. And,

3. And by an unavoidable inference, that these practices were then not of very recent origin.

It should be observed that the devotion paid to relics, and the miraculous benefits alleged to emanate from the shrines of the martyrs, constituted a sort of transition-ground between those more vague invocations of the saints with which the orators of this age usually conclude their commemoration harangues, and the direct worship of the images and pictures of these divinities. The common people, encouraged as they were to call upon a favourite saint for help, and to expect miraculous aid while bending before his shrine, would not fail to look up to the image, or bas-relief, or gaudy picture itself, and to address *to it* their supplications, whenever the opportunity so to do was afforded them. Let it be considered what would inevitably be the popular practices resulting from declamations such as the following, when addressed to a people lately reclaimed from polytheism, and still surrounded by it; the passage occurs at the close of the long homily commemorative of S. S. Bernice and Prosdoce—saints, by the way, not included in the roman calendar. Alas! that a divine like Chrysostom should have believed it to be his duty to relate, and with commendation, such a story! A mother plunges with her two daughters, into a river, and thus, while "marrying them to Christ," she "baptized" them also, as well as obtained for them, and for herself, as by force, the crown of martyrdom! a story, both in itself, and in its principle, utterly to be reprobated: but whom the church had canonized, the preacher must commend; and commend them too at the cost of the first axioms of christian morality. "Let mothers listen, let virgins listen;—those, that they may thus instruct their daughters; these, that they may thus obey their mothers!" By what means the church had obtained possession of the bones of these drowned martyrs does not appear: their shrines, however, were perpetually resorted to by the people, who thence derived innumerable benefits.

Fortasse non mediocri erga sanctas illas amore exarsistis: cum hoc igitur ardore coram ipsarum reliquiis procidamus, ipsarum capsulas complectamur: multam enim possunt virtutem capsulæ martyrum obtinere, quemadmodum et ossa martyrum vim

magnam habent. Neque die tantum hujus festivitatis, sed aliis etiam diebus, iis assideamus, eas obsecremus, obtestemur ut patronæ sint nostræ; multam enim fiduciam obtinent, non viventes modo, sed et mortuæ; multoque majus cum sunt mortuæ. Jam enim stigmata ferunt Christi; cum autem stigmata hæc ostenderint, omnia Regi possunt persuadere. Quando igitur tanta illæ virtute pollent, tantaque apud eum amicitia, cum continua velut obsessione, ac perpetua illarum visitatione, in familiaritatem nos illarum insinuaverimus, ipsarum opera Dei misericordiam impetremus, quam nobis omnibus contingat, &c."—Tom. ii. p. 770.

The English reader should have the benefit of this passage.—

"You are inflamed, I warrant, with a passionate affection toward these saints! Let us then with this very fire of love fall down before their relics! Let us embrace their shrines; for in truth the shrines of the martyrs are of great efficacy, even as the bones of the martyrs possess great force. And not only on this the day of the (martyrs') festival; but on other days also, let us beset them, let us beseech them, let us invoke them, that they would deign to become our patrons. For great confidence (boldness) have they, not living merely, but as dead; aye, much more as dead. For now they bear the stigmas (marks of martyrdom) of Christ; and while showing these stigmas, they are able to persuade the King to any thing. Since then their power is such, and such their favour with God, when we have, with a continued assiduity, and a perpetual frequenting of their society (at their shrines) made ourselves, as it were, their familiar friends, by their means, we shall obtain for ourselves the loving-kindness of God; which, that we may all enjoy, &c."

If only two or three insulated passages of this sort occurred in the writings of the nicene divines, we should peremptorily refuse to regard them as genuine; but in fact, the same pernicious sentiments, and the same evidence as to facts, meet the eye in more places than could soon be enumerated; while incidental allusions to the corresponding observances of the church, and to popular practices therewith agreeing, are equally frequent, and, if possible, still more conclusive.

It is altogether a delusion to suppose that respectable roman catholic writers are used to say any thing more, in recommendation of the demonolatry of their church, than is here and else-

where said by Chrysostom. More often do they subjoin cautions and limitations, or make nice distinctions, which he wholly omits. And it is with these very passages under their eyes, that the teachers of youth in a protestant university are saying from their chairs—"When you want to know what is right or wrong, in matters of religion, you must refer to the wise men who lived fifteen hundred years ago." Let it be so; only allow the people fairly to know whither it is that they and their children are to be led by their future pastors.—Let parents see to it in time, nor hereafter wring their hands in agony and surprise, when they find their sons, fresh from Oxford, commending themselves to the advocacy of the saints, and actually on their knees before a tawdry idol!

But we resume our painful task.

A passage too long to cite, and not easily abridged, in the homily De Sanctis Martyribus, Tom. ii. p. 777, offers to view what may be called the fair side of these superstitions, and describes such a religious use of the shrines and sepulchres of the martyrs, as might *possibly* consist with christian sentiments.—To say so much as this is perhaps going too far. No such extenuation will however avail when a promiscuous crowd is incited to besiege the holy shrine for obtaining specific temporal benefits; or when a saint, corporeally represented by the coffer containing his dust, is solemnly constituted the guardian of a threatened frontier, and is passionately implored, by the noble and the simple, not to permit an incursion of Scythians! If the very principle of polytheism has ever been enacted by men, it was so in the instances which meet us perpetually in the great church writers of the nicene age.

That the demigods of the church should have been trusted in as the most efficient champions of a district,* against earthly foes, does not appear strange when we find attributed to even a bone of them, the most absolute and terrific powers over the hosts of invisible wickedness. Thus our preacher, in the

* The guardian saint of a district was commended to the affections of the people by the fond term *πατριώτης*, and *ὁ ἡμέτερος*.—See Nilus Epist. lib. iv. 62. Thus was the new superstition poured into every channel of the old, and made to cover the very same surfaces.

"Encomium of the Holy Megalomartyr Drosis," after refuting the infidel suggestions of his times, and repelling the supposition that the martyrs had suffered under a delusive persuasion, asks, —"But if they were deceived, how has it come to pass that the Demons are in terror at their dust? How is it that they have fled even from their sepulchres? This has not happened because the Demons fear *the dead* (as such). For see myriads of dead strew the surface of the earth, and upon these they (the demons) hold their seats: and how many demoniacs may one see dwelling in deserts, and making their homes among the tombs? But the moment when any bones of the martyrs are dug up, how do these take their flight, as if from fire, or some intolerable torment! and in articulate sounds proclaim the virtue of these relics, to inflict upon them a deep-felt chastisement!"—Tom. ii. p. 825.

The common people, thus taught by their most eminent doctors to think of the visible relic as endowed with undefined powers of terror, toward the adversary, as well as with kindly energies of guardianship and cure, for the benefit of the faithful, would hardly have a step to take in reaching the last stage of a polytheistic dependence upon inferior deities, and of a belief in the indwelling virtue of the tangible image or picture. It is in fact toward the *visible and tangible symbol* of the invisible divinity, that the preacher directs the eyes and souls of his hearers;—as a little further in the same homily.

"Oh wonderful pyre! what a treasure does it contain! that dust and those ashes, more precious than any gold, more fragrant than any perfumes, more estimable than any jewels! For that which no treasure or gold is able to effect, do the relics of the martyrs effect. When ever has *gold* dispelled disease? When ever has *it* put death to flight? *but the bones of the martyrs have done both!* *μαρτύρων δὲ ὀστὰ ἀμφότερα ταῦτα εἰργάσατο*, that in the times of our ancestors, but *this in our own*."—Tom. ii. p. 828.

The "Encomium of the Egyptian Martyrs," deserves especial attention. If it be not evidence, in our present argument, where can we find any? If it be not *conclusive* evidence, when can we ever hope to find the means of settling any question of history? This signal oration was pronounced on the momentous occasion of a "translation" of the relics of the martyrs of Egypt from Alexandria to—Constantinople (as is believed).

Egypt, the granary of the world, where famished nations have been wont to supply their necessities! and so in things spiritual, Egypt, in boundless munificence, has shed the treasures of its sacred dust over all the world! thus making itself the metropolis of Christendom! thus affording to remote cities those means of security which its own so richly enjoy.

I do not believe that the compass of romanist church literature furnishes a single passage, relative to the virtues and benefits of relics, more decisively expressed, or tending more directly and inevitably to incite the people to make inferior beings their confidence, than the following, which stands among the undoubted writings of the most illustrious of the nicene divines. We do not estimate the popular effect of the preacher's language, unless we imagine the scene, and its circumstances. The thousands, rich and poor, of a vast metropolis, after a vague excitement had been stimulated to a phrensy of expectation, have at length welcomed the disembarkation of the inestimable treasure! The utmost pomp with which the seat of empire could grace so glad a solemnity, has surrounded the procession of splendidly attired priests, from the port to the sacred spot, where this treasure is henceforth to find the place of its repose. More—more than could have been hoped for, has been realized! The martyrs have reached their home, and the hearts of the people rest also in the sober consciousness of waking bliss! They look now to their "Golden-mouthed" orator, to seal, as it were, upon their souls, the loftiest sentiments, and to teach them how best to enjoy, and how to use their newly-acquired wealth. Expectation is breathless, and the preacher, no doubt pointing to the glittering shrines thus speaks—

"These, the bodies of the saints, better than any munitions of adamant, better than imperishable ramparts, wall about our city, and, like lofty precipices on this side and on that, defend us! Nor do they repel merely the assaults of visible enemies, or exclude the approach of evils cognizable by the senses; but (they exclude) also the machinations of invisible demons, and subvert and dissipate all the frauds of the devil; and they do this with as much ease as a robust man overthrows and prostrates the playthings of children! The defences, indeed,

which human art provides, such as walls, ditches, arms, and numerous forces, and whatsoever is usually devised for the security of a city, these all may be rendered of no avail by still greater, and more copious means of attack. But when a city is walled about with the bodies of the saints, whatever countless treasures may have been expended (in the ordinary means of war) no equivalent devices can be brought against a state so defended. Nor, Beloved, is it alone against the devices of men, nor alone against the malice and craft of demons, that this treasure avails us. For if at any time the Lord of all, by the abounding of iniquity, be incensed against us, we may be able, by thrusting these bodies (of the saints) before us, immediately to render Him propitious to our city."—Tom. ii. p. 835.

Lest what he had said should seem, to any of his hearers, "mere noise," κόμπος, the preacher appeals to the experience of many who had, in this very way, obtained "boldness of access to God; and no wonder!"

If this be Christianity, we protestants (Oxford Tract writers included) are fearfully in the wrong. That it differs not at all from the last enormities of popish superstition, need not be affirmed, nor need the just inference it carries be specified.

All the importance, in the eye of the people, which imperial pomp could confer upon the festivals of the martyrs, was actually afforded. The emperor and the court, shining in oriental splendours, headed the processions through the streets of Constantinople, when a martyr was to hold a levee and receive the homage of his votaries. In opening the oration on the Hieromartyr Phocas—"the Gardener," Chrysostom says—"Princes leave their palaces, to-day, to honour the saint, and to wait at his shrine; and the wearers of diadems, anxious to partake of the benefits thence derived, haul the net with us."

I must here turn for a moment from our illustrious preacher, to listen to one of his contemporaries, much less celebrated indeed, but whose *evidence* is equally valuable, in reference to a point of history. St. Asterius, bishop of Amasea, also pronounced an oration on the festival of the Hieromartyr, and of which the following passage is a sample. "Phocas, from the time of his death (303) was become a pillar and support of the

churches on earth: he draws all men to his house; the highways are filled with persons resorting from every country to *this place of prayer*. The magnificent church (at Sinope) which is possessed of his body, is the comfort and ease of the afflicted, the health of the sick, the magazine plentifully supplying the wants of the poor. If in any other place, as in this, some small portion of his relicks be found, it also becomes admirable, and most desired by all Christians. The head of Saint Phocas was kept in his beautiful church in Rome, and the Romans honour him by the concourse of the whole people in the same manner they do Peter and Paul."—*Butler*, July 3.

Why this "Gardener" should have become the patron of sailors, I do not know, but it was the custom for the procession in his honour to take to the water, and to set the Bosporus in a blaze, with thousands of torches; and in many a howling storm of the Ægean, has the frighted sailor screamed for help to this "Saint Phocas;" yet, on reaching his port, perhaps, has forgotten his deliverer. How would our Chysostom have reproved such ingratitude!

The animated oration pronounced on "All Saints'" day is very likely to be referred to as an instance of a sound and christian-like treatment of the subject which it was the preacher's task to illustrate. And yet, knowing the proneness of the human mind to worship the creature rather than the Creator, and to exaggerate the merits of any sort of heroic behaviour, we should certainly denounce it as a very dangerous extravagance; and especially as this florid style is sure to find imitators, much less discreet as well as less honest, and who will drive popular excitement into the worst excesses. Even if nothing worse than the oration now before us were met with in the writings of the Nicene era, we should cease to wonder at the idolatrous enormities of the next age. But alas! this, the sounder mode of treating so treacherous a theme as the merits of the martyrs, stands as the rare exceptive case! while the bold impieties of polytheism are the rule; and mournfully must it be confessed that the most eminent of all the preachers of that age is the very one who stands foremost as the promoter of superstition!

The vile image-worship contended for and restored by the

second council of Nice (the seventh œcumenic) was but a fusing together of two elements—the invocation of the dead, and the religious homage paid to their relics—which Chrysostom was a main instrument in authenticating. The image, whether statue or picture, stood in the popular eye, as the lively symbol of the idea which the other two had awakened in the mind of the votary. The Nicene divines therefore, one and all, and Chrysostom at their head, while bringing forward the two elements of this superstition, made themselves directly the parents of the third. It seems indeed to have been a special object with these preachers, when reminding the people of the benefits to be obtained through the intercession of the Saints and Martyrs, always to strengthen, by all means, the mental association between this expectation of aid, and the local and visible representative of the invisible patron;—an abstract sentiment of homage was felt not to be enough, unless the vague emotion were directed toward the tangible symbol of the patron's person; and in frequent instances there is but too clearly betrayed the orator's anxiety to keep the saint's festival agoing, and his shrine in repute—an anxiety beneath which some inferior motives are likely to have lurked.

The peroration of the homily on St. Meletius may be appealed to as evidence, as to both these points. The archbishop (of Antioch) had gone to his glory now five years; yet the preacher tells the people, in their praise, and for the enhancement of their zeal, that the lapse of time had not at all abated the ardour with which they had at first flocked around the shrine of the saint, who was to be made, by princes and people, by women and men, by old and young, by bond and free, the κοινωνὸς of the prayers they were to offer, while standing near his very urn, πλησίον τῆς λάρνακος ταύτης. It was this connecting clue which imparted to what was already a dangerous but vague sentiment, the pernicious definiteness of a gross superstition.

The usages of the church at this time were all of a kind to localise, and if I might say so, to *corporealise* the devotions rendered to the saints. On any occasion of public calamity the entire populace, led by their magistrates and priests, resorted to some noted shrine, even though it might be at a considerable distance from the city, there to implore the needed aid of their

Tutelar. Sometimes half the population (Chrysostom in one instance says *all*) crossed the Bosporus, in order to supplicate the great apostles, Peter and Paul. To the homily in which this occurs I request the clerical reader to turn if a "Chrysostom" be accessible to him, inasmuch as it lifts the curtain of antiquity, affording us much more than a glimpse of that vaunted period of "wisdom and purity" which we are now called upon to venerate and to imitate. I would gladly see this signal (and in itself admirable) homily given entire to English readers. A few sentences from the "Monitum" will enable the reader the better to estimate the value of the evidence it furnishes.

"In the whole compass of Chrysostom's writings," says the learned editor, "we find nothing of higher merit than this homily (hitherto unknown) whether we regard its elegance, its vigour and point, *or the evidence it supplies* touching the manners of the time, as well as the usages of the church; and especially its contribution to history."—Tom. vi. p. 313.

No doubt whatever rests upon the genuineness of the document before us. The inimitable touches of the master's hand attest each paragraph, and this great preacher's mingled emotions of sorrow, anger, shame, stamp upon every sentence and phrase the very image of his soul. This homily carries us back to the times; and he must be a dull reader who cannot, by the aid of its vivid allusions, bring before his mind the scene, the persons, the movement to which it points.

On Thursday the sixth of April, (Passion Week) in the year 399, there fell a deluge of rain so prodigious as to threaten the destruction of the springing corn, and the utter devastation of the country. On this occasion prayers, supplications, and *processions*, were resorted to; and the entire people, led by the clergy, crowded into and around the great church of Constantinople (dedicated to the Apostles) where they "used as their Deprecators," Peter and Andrew—the latter being the founder, as was believed, of the Byzantine church. They moreover invoked Paul and Timothy, for placating the divine wrath. The rain abating, although the public fear had by no means subsided, the congregated multitude—totus cœtus, taking to their boats and

barges, crossed the tumultuous Bosporus, and repaired, with their bishop, to the church of S. Peter and S. Paul, situated on the Asiatic shore. After this, and one day only intervening, the great bulk of the people of Constantinople—Constantinopolitani plerique—alike forgetful of the danger so lately passed, and regardless of the respect due to that sacred day on which, "for our salvation; Christ was nailed to the cross," rushed to the hippodrome, where the races were then going on! and made all the city resound with disorderly clamours! Meantime the unhappy Chrysostom, in anguish of spirit, kept house—meditating, as we may suppose, the passionate oration now before us. The following day, which was the holy Sabbath, the people resorted to the theatre; where the meretricia spectacula absorbed all their thoughts! Against these contumacious persons (in fact the great mass of the people) the orator bolted the thunders of excommunication; to which however, as it appears, he felt he could not give effect. Whether this oration were delivered on Easter Sunday, or on the following day, is doubtful.

"Must all this be endured? are these things to be borne? I would fain make you your own judges!.... all ranks, mingling in the uproar of the games, and at such a season! How can we excuse ourselves to any stranger who, looking on, should exclaim—"What! the city of the apostles?. Are such things practised by the city that had such an Institutor (St. Andrew): are these things done by a Christian people, and in contempt of this sacred day!... Yes, was it not then that thou, abandoning the church and the spiritual sacrifice, and the convention of brethren, and the solemnities of the fast, wert dragged as a captive by the devil to the shows? Are these things to be endured? are these things to be tolerated?"

The preacher, having briefly described the recent devastation, goes on—"then were there litanies, and supplications, and our whole population, as I may say, like a torrent, rushed to the sites of the apostles, and there we took for our intercessors the holy Peter, and the blessed Andrew, the yokefellow of the apostles; and Paul, and Timothy. And after having done so, the divine wrath being appeased, we passed the sea, daring the stormy waves, and ran to those coryphees—even Peter the basis

of the faith, and Paul, the chosen vessel; and there we held a spiritual assembly, celebrating their conflicts, and showing forth their triumphs over the powers of evil. But ye, not deterred by the terror of what had happened, nor instructed by the apostolic examples, are drawn away." What follows, and which is not connected with our immediate subject, is similar to many passages from the same preacher (and of which several samples will be found in the supplement) wherein he vividly insists upon the corrupting influence of the theatre, and inveighs against those who, while one day gratifying a prurient taste in that home of impurity, dared, on the next, to approach the terrific solemnities of the church. Tom. vi. pp. 313—319.

Did it consist with our present purpose, we might point to several very significant facts, clearly indicated by this oration; but we must confine ourselves to our argument. Some readers may be surprised in meeting with this explicit and unimpeachable evidence of so strange an inconsistency, attaching to the professedly christian populace of Constantinople at this time. The people (and of all ranks) although so far under the influence of religious convictions, as to rush to church at the impulse of a sudden fear, were yet in so slight a degree governed by a sense of religion that, instantly after their devout panic had subsided, and at the most solemn of all seasons, they rushed like a torrent, to the scenes of riotous amusement, and of impure delight! There is however nothing really to be wondered at in this violent contrast —in this rebound of passion—in this alternate swing of impulses which are perfectly homogeneous in themselves, although they drive the mind in different directions. Does not all history tell us that dissoluteness of manners has ever accompanied polytheistic fanaticism? If we will deal equitably in comparing paganism with the debauched christianity of the fourth century, we shall not think the latter to have been in any such sense of better moral quality than the former, as to induce us to look for purer manners under the one, than have usually been found to prevail under the other. And in fact, the few *honest* writers of the time are heard saying—"we are *worse* than pagans."

Chrysostom, upright as he was, and intelligent too, but not accustomed to rise much above the range of the minds around

him, could not divine the reason of that state of things which, when he beheld it, wrung his heart with anguish. He had himself promoted, with all his might, the debasing superstitions of his age;—he had sent the people to their gods;—alas! he had winked at the foul tricks by means of which the credulity of the people was turned to account at the shrines of the martyrs:—the "fables" toward which the mind of the christianized nations was now turned, received the rich benefit of his impassioned eloquence! With a mighty arm he had helped forward the movement which so soon afterwards led the people of Southern Europe, and of the East, into the lowest depths of idolatrous infatuation. Strange, that such a man should not have understood the great lesson of the Old Testament! Strange, that he should not have recognised in christianity a pure theology, intended to turn men effectively from "dumb idols, to serve the living and true God!"—Strange, that such an expositor should never have comprehended the words—"there is one God, and ONE MEDIATOR between God and Man!" Amazing is it, that a heart so warm and so devout should not at once have spurned the follies that had been heaped upon the path whereon men might "draw nigh to the throne of grace, and find help in time of need!" Black delusions were they, which could darken a soul like that of Chrysostom!

We have already heard one of the most distinguished of the churchmen of this period inciting the people to awaken their celestial guardians—admone Petrum, excita Paulum; yet it may be alleged perhaps that this was a mere extravagance of the lips, involving no practical idolatry. But can we think so when, standing on the shore of the Bosporus, we see its stormy current choked with boats and barges, conveying the thousands of the city to the opposite shore, to besiege the altars of this Paul and Peter? There was something more in this than a rhetorical extravagance, nor was it any thing less than polytheism, treading its wonted path of frenzied delusion.

Besides the declamatory homilies which are devoted to the subject of saint-worship; frequent incidental allusions, occurring in the midst of sober expositions of scripture, attest, not merely the fact (concerning which there can be no doubt) of the existence of this

superstition, but of its universality, and of the quiet possession it had obtained of the christianized world. It would be endless to cite the instances of this kind which meet us in this one writer. Thus, in the exposition of Psalm CXV. two lines only of passing allusion to facts, known to all present, exclude any possible doubt as to the settled usages of the times.—"See cities flocking around the sepulchres of the martyrs; and the people all inflamed with a passionate desire toward them."—Tom. v. p. 377. An equally undesigned allusion to the sumptuousness and magnificence of this worship meets us in the homily on 2 Cor. xii: and as it exhibits, as by accident, the circumstance, and the exterior aspect of the piety of the fourth century, it deserves the reader's especial attention. The preacher has brought Alexander before his audience, that he may, in the person of the hero, triumph over all worldly greatness, while comparing the conqueror of empires with Christ.—

"But why do I speak of Christ, when he has granted, even to his disciples, to shine forth after their death? Where now, I pray you, is the tomb of Alexander? and tell me the day of his death? But as for the servants of Christ, even their sepulchres are illustrious, claiming (as their own) the most royal cities: and their festivals are known and observed all the world over! Alexander's tomb his own countrymen disregard; while even to barbarians, the (christian sepulchre) is known. Yes! the sepulchre of the servants of him who was crucified surpass in splendour the palaces of kings, and not merely in spaciousness and beauty of architecture—*this* pre-eminence indeed they possess; but in that which is much more—*in the assiduity of those who frequent them.*"

We pause here a moment to ask whether this affirmation, even if it were thought to be a rhetorical extravagance, does not clearly imply, at once, that the worship of the martyrs was then recommended to the people by every sumptuous decoration which could make it rival and eclipse the pagan rites; and that the popular infatuation had reached a very high pitch. Elsewhere, the preacher (his contemporaries saying the same) has told us for what purposes, and with what expectations, the glittering shrines of the martyrs were frequented: he goes on—

"For even he who is invested with the purple draws nigh to these sepulchres that he may embrace them; and laying aside his

pomp, stands a *petitioner of the saints* that they would plead with God for him; and the personage whose brows are girt by a diadem, implores the Tentmaker, and the Fisherman—*though they be dead*, to become his patrons. Now therefore will you venture to call the Lord of these (saints) dead, whose very servants, though dead, become the advocates of the masters of the world? Nor is it at Rome alone that this is to be seen; but in Constantinople also; for here the son of Constantine thought he was doing high honour to his father, if he might inter him in the Porch of the Fisherman (the vestibule of the church dedicated to St. Peter).* Consider that, what door keepers are who attend the palace gates of kings, here, and at this sepulchre, emperors are to the Fishermen! . . Or compare the tombs of emperors with these sepulchres:—there a deep solitude, here a vast concourse: or compare these sepulchres again with royal palaces;—there you see those who repel the approaching crowd, here those who invite and draw together the rich and poor—men and women—bond and free:—there you find many fears; here, pleasures ineffable . . . . There indeed princes exercise the power over their subjects, to bind and to loose. But no such wretched and grovelling authority as this is exerted by the BONES OF THE SAINTS; nay it is an authority far surpassing it; for they (the relics) summon Demons into their presence, and torment them; and release those (the demoniacs) who have been bound by those bitter bonds. What is there more tremendous than this tribunal (of the relics)? No one is seen—none stands at the side of the demon—the demoniac (as an executioner). Yet are there voices and lacerations! stripes and torments—tongues are heard conflicting—the demon is unable to endure that amazing power (of the relics). Thus those who have worn the body, hold a mastery over incorporeal beings; and DUST, and BONES, and SKIN, card (or *winnow*) those invisible natures! So it is that while no one undertakes a distant journey merely to behold the palaces of kings,

* Eusebius (de vita Constantini, lib. iv. c. 70, 71.) describes the sumptuous obsequies of the first christian emperor; and mentions his interment in the church of the apostle,—as well as the prayers offered for the repose of his soul, and the benefit he might derive from a participation in the rites of the church, there celebrated.

many kings have come on pilgrimage to behold this spectacle.' —Tom. x. p. 742.

It will be my painful task, in the next number, to lay open the shameless frauds and impious miracle-mongering by means of which the trade of the priests at these magnificent shrines was kept a-going;—frauds incomparably more discreditable than were any that had been practised in the heathen oracular temples. This is indeed a heavy theme; and how sorrowful—how sickening, when a man like Chrysostom is found acting as the Hierophant of these mysteries of iniquity! It is well—well for the modern church (if the modern church will hear what so much concerns it) it is well that *some* of the zealous promoters of these gainful superstitions have so far forgotten discretion, as to do, and say, and leave on record, more than enough to make it evident whose agents they were, and at whose bidding this vast scheme of delusion was compacted.

All was not however fraud: indeed so intricately are fanaticism and hypocrisy related, that it would be perhaps impossible to name any instance in which the one, as connected with religion, has broadly developed itself apart from, or without quickly introducing, the other. Many of the cases so frequently referred to by church writers, in which demoniacs, or frenzied, or melancholic persons were seized with a sudden horror, and fled from the neighbourhood of saintly dust, may easily be explained without recurrence to the supposition, either of miracles, on the one hand, or of deliberate foul play on the part of the church. We have only to remember that dense masses of the ill-taught and profligate populace of all the great cities, were accustomed to be harangued, on every festival of the martyrs, in a style of solemn bombast, observant of no bounds, and such as could not fail deeply to affect all present whose temperament was imaginative, especially if tending toward insanity. These turgid addresses were received by the crowd with thunders of applause—clapping the hands, shouting, bellowing, while all the glories, and all the terrors of the christian revelation were added to the distinct personifications in which a rich polytheism is used to deal. Such a crowd, thus wrought upon, would always include some, and often many, whose overstrained nervous system was then trembling on the brink of sanity;—if

still on that brink ; such persons, undoubtedly believing that the mere proximity of the dust of a martyr invariably affected the victim of demoniacal possession with unutterable anguish and ghostly terrors, would want very little incidental excitement to bring upon themselves the horrid consciousness of such pains, and of such fears.—Here then was the church demoniac, revealed in the crowd by his smothered groans, or by his sudden scream :—he is seized by the porters of the church—is led yelling, struggling, foaming, to the priests :—these know too well their part to attempt to soothe him:—on the contrary, they eagerly snatch the occasion for exhibiting to the multitude a spontaneous, and a cheap instance of the terrific powers of the dust of which they are the guardians. " Bring him hither : drag him to the rails of our saint, and there let him confess himself to be one of the pagan gods, usurping the human form !"—He is brought up ! The wretch, resiling, grinding his teeth, clenching his fists, and fruitlessly attempting to fix his rigid heels upon the slippery marble, is thrust up to the very grating of the shrine ;—and if it had been actually at a white heat it would not have drawn from him a shriller scream of intolerable pain. " He burns ! the demon howls ! Holy and thrice blessed St. Barlaam, save us ! " the cry of frighted thousands shakes the roof of the church, like a thunder !

To scenes such as this, Chrysostom and his contemporaries are perpetually referring :—they were *facts ;* and while they served to fix deeply in the minds of the vulgar the dark belief on which the credit of the saint depended, they seemed to excuse, to those who knew better, the deliberate juggling by means of which, once and again, when there was need, the popular belief was to be enhanced, or was to be defended from the insidious encroachments of common sense.

" The body of the dying martyr, when gushing with blood," says our preacher, " surpasses in magnificence and splendour the vault of heaven, gleaming with stars. Heaven with its stars is gazed upon by men and demons. Toward the bleeding wounds of the martyr the faithful among men turn their eyes ; while demons dare not behold the spectacle ; or if compelled to look, their sight is utterly dazzled by the insufferable brightness thence radiating ! This I affirm, not merely on the faith of what may have happened

long ago, but on the ground of facts in these times occurring. Take now, I pray you, some one possessed and frenzied;—lead him up to that holy sepulchre in which are contained the relics of a martyr; and you shall see how he will start back and flee! —Even as if he were about to tread upon burning coals, so will he leap from the very vestibule; nor dare to lift his eyes toward the shrine itself! But now, if after the lapse of time, and when the relics have mouldered into mere dust and shreds, the demons dare not look up to the monument, nor apppoach the bare bones of the saint, *τὰ γυμνὰ ὀστᾶ τοῦ ἁγίου*, most manifest is it that *then*, when the martyr was purpled with gore, and resplendent, more than the sun's dazzling beams, with wounds, they would be smitten, and depart with blenched eyes."—Tom. ii. p. 805.

Many passages throwing light upon the commencements of these martyr shrines might be adduced, did my limits permit: I will, as a sample, refer the reader to one which is highly significant, and in which is narrated the endeavour made by the civil and ecclesiastical authorities together to supplant impurity by superstition, at a Daphnæan shrine: it occurs in the homily "on S. Babyla, and against Julian and the heathen."—Tom. ii. p. 663.

Impracticable as it is here to adduce more than a scanty sample of passages, bearing upon our subject, I hope at least so far to diversify my illustrations as to afford the reader a not partial notion of the religious system of the period in question. The following is at once curious, and conclusive, as to our argument. It is the exordium of the homily "on the Ascension." The facts to which it refers are briefly these.—

Flavian, Bishop of Antioch, (by whom Chrysostom was ordained priest) had observed with great uneasiness, that his flock were exposed to cruel disappointments, in their daily recourse to the martyrs, from the circumstance that the genuine and orthodox dust of saints had been incautiously placed side by side with heretical and schismatic bones, beneath the pavement of the church; so that, in fact, the most well-intentioned suppliants, seeking aid in the day of trouble, from a martyr, were frequently found (through mere error) actually standing over, and directing their prayers to, the execrable ashes of an Arian, or "a dissenter." This was an evil which cried for a remedy. The zealous bishop therefore, after removing

the pavement, took up the orthodox ossicles, one and all, and placed them by themselves, in a common shrine, to which the people might thenceforward resort, without peril, or risk of exhaling the breath of prayer to those who had no power to help them! By what means the discrimination was effected, in this charnel-vault, and whether under the direction of a file of demoniacs, or otherwise, our authorities do not inform us. The result however of this needful classification was most happy.

The preacher reminds his hearers that, although neither the souls of the martyrs, nor their relics, could have sustained any injury from the proximity of their remains to those of heretics, while all lay promiscuously beneath the pavement of the church; yet the *people* were thence exposed to the most serious damage. Not so *now*, when the sheep are removed from the wolves, and the "Pearls" are set by themselves: *now*, indeed, we may run to these athletes of piety without fear; *now*—"the LIVING are removed from among the dead," ἀπέστησαν τῶν νεκρῶν οἱ ζῶντες: he goes on—

"To them (the martyrs) it was indeed no damage; but to our people no mean loss accrued; when any one running to the relics of the martyrs, offered his prayers with incertitude and hesitation, not well knowing which were, in truth, the coffers of the saints, or where precisely the treasures—the true treasures, might lie! It was as if, when the sheep should be led to the pure fountains of water, a pestilential stench, issuing from some source near at hand, should compel them to keep aloof! So it happened in this our fold.—The people drawing nigh to those pure wells of the martyrs, when they perceived an heretical stench to be issuing from the same places, were hindered from approaching again. The wise shepherd and teacher of all, perceiving this, who so ordered every thing in the church as to secure the edification of all, did not long overlook the occasion of damage to the flock;—zealous lover and emulator of the martyrs, as he was. What does he do? Behold his wisdom! * He stopped up and sealed the muddy and offensive springs, and removed the pure waters of the martyrs to a pure place, by themselves! See then, in this instance,

* Christian Morals.

what an indulgent kindness toward the dead, what a reverence toward the martyrs, what a care for the welfare of the people! Toward the (common) dead, indulgent kindness, in not moving their bones, but in allowing them to lie where they were! Toward the martyrs, reverence, in removing them from juxta-position with the wicked! Toward the people, care, in not suffering them to offer their prayers with ambiguity! Wherefore it is that we have brought you together in this place, that there may be a more splendid assemblage; that the spectacle may be more brilliant; for we have to day a convention, not of men merely, but of martyrs also; nor of martyrs only, but of angels also.—Yes, angels are here present with us:—martyrs and angels are of our company to day! If you would behold, as well martyrs as angels, open the eyes of faith, and gaze upon this spectacle"...—Tom. ii. pp. 529, 530.

It would be begging the question now at issue, to affirm that all this is not Christianity. Yet surely we may say it is not *Protestantism.*— Read the homily "against peril of idolatry!" Those learned persons therefore who, with such, and with volumes of such passages before them—familiarly known to them—the matter of their daily studies, have said—"it is to Chrysostom and his contemporaries we must refer every doubt in point of faith and practice—for they are our masters," such persons are, in no honest sense—protestants. Who has ever stood in a false position, if they do not, as ministers of a reformed church?

The last citation concerning Flavian, and martyr-worship at Antioch, carries back these practices to the early part of the fourth century, when they appear as the then long established usages of the christian world. And such is the aspect under which they present themselves throughout the literature of the Nicene age. Frequently they are spoken of as what the church had received from the earliest ages. Asterius, bishop of Amasea, and a contemporary of Chrysostom, in his Homily against Avarice, (greediness of gain rather) in stating the use to be made of the festivals of the martyrs, wishes his hearers to understand and consider, why it was, and for what purposes, that "our Fathers had instituted the festivals you now witness, and why they firmly enjoined them to their successors." And in the Homily on New

Year's day,* as well as in the one just mentioned, inveighs against those abuses, connected with these observances, which, as they imply a slow wearing out of religious sentiments once existing, suppose the lapse of time. Incidental evidence, of the most conclusive kind, points to the same facts.—Poetry takes up and illuminates sentiments, opinions, modes of action, which have already come to constitute the settled elements of the social system. Poetry does not *originate;* but it adorns. In this view, it is curious and important too, in relation to our argument, to look into the Poems of the amiable Paulinus, bishop of Nola—a contemporary of the great divines now before us. These poems, as well as the same writer's Epistles, exhibit the ripened—unquestioned veneration of relics, and the polytheism therewith connected, in a manner which alone would supply conclusive proof of the antiquity of these pernicious superstitions. I entreat the reader to turn to the pages of this writer, if he have any doubts on the subject. My limits forbid my making quotations. The last enormities of an abject polytheism, graced by elegance of diction, and of sentiment too, we here find recommended by a christian bishop, at a time to which we are to defer in matters of faith and worship!

And thus too Jerome's angry defence of the homage paid to relics, in his letter to Vigilantius, and his animated appeal *to the practice of the church universal,* as authorising it, leaves no room to doubt (other evidence not adduced) that the entire system, as represented in the citations above given from Chrysostom, was then neither recent, nor of partial extent. Its universality indeed is in no way to be accounted for, apart from the supposition of its having originated at a remote period. That it did so, in fact, is capable of an easy proof. The very ancient belief concerning the state of souls, and the observances that were thereupon founded —the rich and vivid conceptions entertained of invisible orders, and of their intimate relations with the human family—the very ancient superstition connected with the veneration of the Cross—the boundless exaggerations indulged in when the merit of eminent persons was spoken of—the inveterate tendency of the human mind toward polytheism, and the sumptuous worship, and the veneration of sensible objects, and (as to the chiefs of the church)

* S. Asterii Hom. Antwerp. pp. 31, 51.

the traitorous wish to grasp converts from paganism, by bringing Christianity to as near a visible resemblance as possible to the ancient rites—all these various and yet homogeneous influences, meeting upon the church at a time when the genuine energy of evangelic doctrine had long ceased to be felt, produced their natural consequences; and, in a blended form, showed themselves at the very first moment when it was possible for them so to appear—in all the meretricious magnificence, and in all the impieties and frauds — the illusions and the tricks, of a renovated polytheism. As rich and as *sensible* as the fading heathenism, and far more potent, as to the imagination, and animated by a vivid belief which heathenism had long failed to inspire, and giving scope to that new and general tendency toward religious feeling—that reaction from atheism, which marked the times, such was the christianized demonolatry of the fourth century.

In following, as I have done, the guidance of bishop Newton, I have confined myself, as well to the particular branch of the general subject to which he refers, as to the particular authorities to which he appeals; and have even restricted myself (or very nearly so) to the very orations or treatises which he specifies. But it will not be imagined that the evidence has been exhausted. No one who reads merely the citations from Chrysostom, and duly considers what is implied in them, as to the notions and usages of the times, can suppose that other contemporary writers are silent on the same themes. It is far otherwise. Not a fiftieth part of what might deserve to be called THE EVIDENCE, bearing upon our subject, has been produced. Scarcely a writer—if there be one—of the Nicene church—eastern or western, would withhold his contributions to the mass: and, alas! what a volume would Augustine alone furnish!

To have adopted a more comprehensive method in adducing this evidence, would have rendered it necessary to carry the subject forward, through several of these numbers; nor would it, perhaps, have availed our immediate purpose to do so. The few passages that have been cited will, I think, be enough to satisfy every honest and intelligent reader, as to the broad fact assumed—namely—That the direct invocation of saints and martyrs, and an idolatrous veneration of their symbols and relics, were carried to

as culpable an extreme in the Nicene church, as they have at any time since been carried in the Romish church; and that, in whatever terms we may choose to express our disapprobation of these superstitions as patronized by the latter, they cannot, with any colour of reason, be retracted when we have to speak of the same, as attaching to the former.

I am not, just now, undertaking to prove that the church of Rome is idolatrous in its principles and rites. All I say is this, that—If the church of Rome be liable to this heavy imputation, the Nicene church is liable to it also, and in the same measure: and that, in comparing the two, on any admitted principles of historical justice, a less heavy blame must be made to attach to the church which only followed a bad example, than to the church which set it;—and a less heavy blame to modern Romanism, which has laboured to save christian theology by insisting upon distinctions, than to Nicene Christianity, which rushed forward on the path of superstition, heedless almost of any.

The lapse of ages did however bring about some changes in the modes and forms of this christianized polytheism; and these demand to be briefly noticed, and the more so, because, if not adverted to here, a ground of exception would probably be taken against my ultimate inference.

POLYTHEISM—involving, of course, a belief in the existence of SUBORDINATE INVISIBLE POWERS, may be defined as a reverential regard toward, and a habit of applying to, such beings, for help, succour, and favour. IDOLATRY is Polytheism, definitively associated, in its expressions and rites, with certain visible and tangible symbols, or representations of those invisible guardians.

Polytheism may exist, and has, in some few instances, existed, apart from Idolatry, which is its form or accident; nevertheless, the constitution of the human mind tends so directly to bring about a connexion between the objects of a fond imaginative belief, and some visible types of those objects, that a purely intellectual polytheism has ever been rare; and never, when it appears, can it be regarded as any thing else than a transition from the abstract to the sensible. It need hardly be said that, even in its utmost intellectual or abstract stage, polytheism excludes the genuine and spiritual communion of the soul with the One and True God.

Many causes, and some of them apparently trivial, may determine which, among the various symbols of the unearthly Powers, who are the objects of polytheistic worship, shall be selected as their types or representatives:—it may be a shapeless stone, or a sculptured pillar: it may be a picture, or a statue; it may be the bones or ashes of the late-mortal, and now the divus. Whatever it be, *polytheism* becomes *idolatry*, at the moment when the devotee attaches the reverential sentiment of which an invisible subordinate power has been the object, to some specific sensible type, and to which type he turns his eyes, when uttering his petitions, or offering his adulation.

Among the various symbols toward which polytheism turns, the picture, the bas-relief, and most of all, the painted and decorated statue, will come at length to have the preference. Obvious reasons secure, for the graphic representation, or *likeness* of the divus, this favour; and equally so with the tasteful and cultured worshipper, as with the rude. Nevertheless, unusual circumstances may, for a while, give prominence to symbols of another kind; and this, as well with the vulgar, as with the educated. It was so with the christianized nations in the fourth century.

The churches of this period were indeed richly decorated, as well with pictures and sculptures, as with costly marbles, beautiful mosaics, gems, precious stones, and prodigious accumulations of sacramental vessels, and votive offerings, in massive silver and gold. But they boasted treasures more peculiar;—the actual remains, or portions of the dust of those champions of the faith who had recently sealed their testimony with their blood! The instances were indeed extremely few in which the genuineness of these relics could be ascertained, in any rational manner: nevertheless, priests positively affirmed, what the worshippers wished to believe; and both parties were satisfied in this easy adjustment of their common interests. Moreover, in most cases, and whenever the pretence to have obtained such relics in any ordinary mode, could not possibly, and from the circumstances of the martyrs' death, be advanced, even by the most shameless; or if advanced, believed, even by the most stupidly credulous, then angels were at hand to gratify the desires of the church:—or even if *angels* forgot their office in any instance, or were baffled

in their search for the inestimable pearls, demoniacs, more obsequious, or more sharp scented, supplied the lack of service on the part of the celestials. Any way, the church—the clergy, the people (with angels, demons, martyrs, saints, all at their beck, and all on the best terms one with another) proved the truth of the modern axiom, that "the demand will regulate the supply." In a word, "holy bones" were never long wanting where there were already knaves to grope for them, and dupes to worship them.

So cheap did this charnel-ware at length become—so profusely did the volcano of delusion vomit forth its *ashes*, that the commodity fell in esteem, and gave place to objects of reverence better adapted, altogether, to the purposes of superstition. Moreover, in very many instances, the deluge of barbarian invasion had so swept every thing before it, civil and sacred, as to obliterate, if one might so say, the more ancient worship—carrying away, or annihilating, not only the relics and the shrines, but the very people who had been used to flock around them. The new comers had therefore to look out for themselves, their gods; and the church gave them the best it had then to give—namely, pictures and images.

An important consequence of this substitution of images for relics is however to be noticed. The worship of relics, while it recommended itself by a colour of natural sentiment, even to the most cultured minds, as well as to the vulgar, stood exempt, by the very occultness of the subject, from that reprehension to which the open worship of images might have been liable. The mists of death hung over the cradle of these christian superstitions; —the shadows of the grave shrouded these early polytheistic rites: —the loud or shrill voice of prayer, when addressed to the demigods of the church, seemed to be hallowed when it was re-echoed from a vault! Thus the gross offence of idolatry was veiled by sepulchral glooms. The Soul of the ancient Paganism—even the gay demon who had sported so long in the open places of the world —laughing and revelling with the children of men, sometime in the mask of a Jupiter, sometime in that of a Mercury, or a Bacchus; but hitherto always jovial; always "the good fellow," at length encountered one too strong for him; was dislodged, and was sent

howling through the dry places of the nether world. He wandered there however but for a "short time;" for although all access to the upper skies seemed likely to be closed against his return, it was not so:—there was yet a crevice left; and after a few days, this very demon broke up upon the nations—through the Tomb of the Martyrs!

The polytheism of Relics was but however, a transition form, soon to give way to one more permanent. The visible and national triumph of christianity, while it removed from the surface of the social system the crazy apparatus of the ancient worship, which was taken down, and cleared from its old sites, just as one sees the tawdry theatricals of a Fair, huddled up, and carted off, before dawn of the next day—this triumph, while it seemed to exclude the danger of a return of the nations to paganism, relaxed also that jealousy of idols which might have prevented such a return. An interval of half a century allowed this necessary jealousy to slumber:—it did slumber; and at a moment of universal torpor in the church, Jupiter and Juno, Hercules and Diana, adapting their visages and their attire to their new parts, crept, blushing for themselves, into the statues of the saints.

But the Image-worship—the bowing, the kissing, the prostrations, the sufflations, which would have startled the ancient worshippers of Relics, as too sensibly reminding them of the then extant paganism, under which they had suffered, did not fail, even in the darkest times, to shock the better feelings of many. From this salutary re-action sprang the iconoclastic zeal of the eighth century; and from that frustrated reformation resulted another, and an opposite re-action, expressed in the stupendous impieties of the second council of Nice—the seventh œcumenic, and which the church of Rome has made her own, as she was the prime mover of what was there enacted. Unhappily, and this was the reason of its failure, the iconoclastic zeal stopped short in the *idolatry* of the church, leaving its *polytheism* unreproved, or nearly so. "The tree was cut down, but the roots remained in the ground." The very enormities of *Image-worship* had served to screen from notice and rebuke the essential viciousness of the ancient *polytheism*, whence it had sprung; and in this signal instance (too nearly resembling that of the Lutheran and English reformation)

a fatal reserve in favour of the doctors of the fourth century, prevented a course from being taken which the sincerity, the intelligence, and, as it may be hoped, the piety of the iconoclastic reformers, would otherwise have led them to adopt; and which, had it been fairly opened before them, they would, we may believe, have heartily rejoiced to follow. But it was not surmised that the "fully instructed doctors" of the nicene age, the "wise men" from whose lips we are to learn what is true and false in religion, could have erred; and these doctors had, in the most ample and decisive manner, given their sanction to christian polytheism, in its very grossest forms:—*this* therefore was to be saved, and *therefore* also, the ill-concerted, yet commendable endeavour to exempt the church from the contempt and scoffs of Mahometans, was frustrated. Well will it be for our children, if *the very same error*, on the part of the Reformers, does not ere long bring the Reformation itself, as it now threatens to do, to the same melancholy end!

The Eastern and Western churches occupied an advanced position, which they well knew how to improve, while they defended their idolatry—their image-worship, assuming the polytheism of which it was the fruit to be unquestionable. They might indeed, without much injury, sustain a temporary defeat, on this advanced ground;—they might retire a few steps, and even make concessions;—all was safe so long as no one dared to assail the citadel of the nicene polytheism: the storm would blow over which had compelled the dainty idols of the church to hide their heads for a moment:—presently they would be able to walk forth again in fine weather to revel, as before, in the favours of their votaries. They did so walk forth. Although the Saracen—far more christian in creed and worship than the "orthodox," had notably triumphed over these idols wherever he had advanced:—for, along the entire frontier of christendom they had been set up, upon towers and walls, as the invincible champions of the church; God's avenger had broken the chain, had trampled all this trumpery in the dust, slaughtering, and putting to flight those who had trusted to them; and yet after all these disgraces, the idols were again lifted upon their pedestals, and a solemn injunction laid upon all people to bow down and worship them. In what terms

was this injunction couched?—The second council of Nice, after having, with pious care, thoroughly sifted the controversy concerning "holy images"—this council of christendom, thus expressed its will—and "the will of Heaven." Three hundred and fifty bishops—each subscribing himself with significant hypocrisy—Indignus Episcopus, united their voices in the final ACCLAMATION.

Sancta Synodus exclamavit: omnes sic credimus: omnes idem sapimus: omnes approbantes subscripsimus. Hæc est fides apostolorum. *Hæc est fides Patrum.* Hæc est fides orthodoxorum. Hæc fides orbem terrarum confirmavit. Credentes in unum Deum in trinitate laudatum, venerandas Imagines amplexamur. Qui secus agunt anathemate percelluntor. Qui sic non sentiunt ab Ecclesia depelluntor. Nos antiquæ Ecclesiæ legislationi insistimus; nos decreta patrum custodimus. Nos adjicientes aliquid aut auferentes ecclesiæ, anathematizamus. Nos venerandas imagines suscipimus. Nos qui secus faxint anathemate percellimus. Quicumque sententias Sacræ Scripturæ de idolis contra venerandas imagines adducant, anathema. Qui venerandas imagines idola appellant, anathema. Qui dicunt quod imagines christiani ut deos adorent, anathema. Qui scientes communicant cum illis qui contra venerandas imagines sentiunt, aut eos dehonestant, anathema. Qui præter Christum Dominum Deum nostrum, dixerit alium nos a cultu idolorum liberasse, anathema. Qui audent Ecclesiam catholicam dicere idola aliquando suscepisse, anathema. Multi anni. etc.

After wishing "long life to the imperial persons, Constantine and his mother, the empress Irene (fit patroness of "holy images!") the holy synod goes on specially to curse certain of its opponents, and to bless its adherents; and concludes in a manner too characteristic to be passed over.

Si quis Deum secundum humanitatem non *circumscriptibilem* confessus fuerit, anathema. Si quis evangelicas narrationes per picturam representatas non acceptaverit, anathema. Si quis has non salutaverit in nomine Domini et sanctorum ejus, anathema. Si quis traditionem ecclesiæ, sive scripto sive consuetudine valentem non curaverit, anathema. Germani orthodoxi, perpetua memoria. Joannis et Georgii perpetua memoria. Preconum veritatis, perpetua memoria. Trinitas hos tres approbavit. Horum

disputationibus inhærentes, digni reddamur misericordiis et gratia primi et magni supremi sacerdotis Jesu Christi Dei nostri, intercedente simul inviolata Domina nostra, Sancta Deipara, et omnibus sanctis. Fiat. Fiat. Amen.*

The decisions of this Council, thus summarily expressed in the above "acclamation" of the Fathers, fixed the most debasing idolatries upon the Greek and the Latin churches, through a long course of ages, and even to the present moment. At once to approve these decisions, and to inculpate the practice of the churches who have adopted them, is a palpable inconsistency, equally uncharitable and absurd. To disallow the decisions of the second council of Nice, and at the same time to profess adherence to the Fathers of the *first* council of Nice, and to their *immediate successors*, is not less absurd; and the absurdity in this instance is rendered despicable by the prevarication it implies.

What then is the amount of the difference between the Fathers of the *second* council of Nice, and the Fathers of the first; or, let us say, the immediate successors of these—the great divines from whose writings "church principles" are to be drawn?—The Fathers of the later council were not accustomed to pay any other religious regard to the Saints, the Martyrs, the Virgin, or their relics, or symbols, than had always been rendered by those of the earlier period; nor were they used to express their belief in the supernatural efficacy of such acts of devotion in terms of stronger import, or in language more exceptionable; nor did they encourage among the people any practices, or ritual observances essentially, or even ostensibly, unlike those prevalent at the earlier time. We find the leading persons of the church, in the fourth century, exhibiting an extreme anxiety to impart a definité, local, and palpable individuality to the devotion which the people were taught to render to their invisible guardians. Thus, whenever they needed help, they were to resort to "*this* Martyrium;"—they were to prostrate themselves before "*this* shrine;"—they were solemnly assured that the genuine dust—dust proved to be genuine by daily miracles, had been carefully sifted from out of the poisonous admixtures of inodorous heretical ashes!—

* Hardouin, Tom. iv. p. 758.

the innate virtue—the ineffable and terrific power of "these very relics" was, from time to time, awfully attested by the yells and convulsions of demoniacs.

Or, to bring the earlier and the later practices and notions of the church to a point of more particular comparison.—At the time (as we have already mentioned) of the Saracen invasions, the christian frontiers were at every accessible point, bristled with images of the Virgin and Saints—the people having been exhorted to put their sole trust in these invincible guardians—nothing fearing; since no weapons formed against these unearthly champions could be of any avail:—"look to the Saints, and no Saracens can touch your borders:—their honour in heaven, as well as on earth, is pledged for your safety." Was not this polytheism? was not this idolatry? were not Mahometans orthodox men, compared with these baptized heathens?

But what had the great divines of the earlier age said on the same subjects?—the chief of them, in the most solemn phrases, and with a redundant explicitness of language, assures the populace of Constantinople that an empire, or a city, well furnished with the bones of martyrs, might defy the world in arms! Only trust to your saints, fellow citizens! and you are safe:—for do not the invisible powers, mightier as they are than man, do not these tremble and resile? what martial array then need you dread?

Yes, but here *is* a difference!—Well-instructed christian people, in the seventh and eighth centuries, were taught to defend their cities with *images;*—while those of the fourth were to do so—with *relics!* The Fathers of the second council of Nice put confidence in carved wood and sculptured marble; their predecessors, in crumbling bones, dust and rags.

Equitably considered then, it does not appear that any distinction more important can be made good between the piety of the second council of Nice, and that of the first, than what may be thought to attach to the difference between the skeleton of a Saint—and the image of him.

THE GENERAL INFERENCE, AFFECTING THE HYPOTHESIS OF CHURCH PRINCIPLES.

THE chief slave within the circle of every despotism, is the despot himself; and often he is the most wretched, as well as the most degraded of all. This principle holds in various applications.—Whoever is labouring to entrap, to beguile, and so to trample upon and abuse his fellow-men, is himself not only the miserable victim of tyrannic passions; but, in the end, if not at first, becomes so of those terrors that are born of cruelty and fraud. The direct tendency of the modern enterprise to revive the superstitions of the middle ages, is, it need not be proved, to weave about the lulled social system the invisible films of a spiritual tyranny. The people are to receive every thing relating to faith, morals, and even to their civil duty, from their lawful teachers:—and these teachers, in their turn, from a single centre: whoever inquires or disputes, is to be silenced:—the Holy Scriptures are to be put into the hands only of the "fully instructed," and the submissive, or "docile:"—the civil power, not only must not presume to rescue any whom the church would chastise, but must do its part, whenever called upon, to punish the contumacious.

Each article of this scheme of horrors has been formally or incidentally professed by its present promoters. Until the moment shall come for openly giving it effect, the labours of these persons are chiefly directed toward that which is ever the preliminary work of the despot, namely, to degrade his intended victims in their own esteem; and especially to trample upon their understandings, not so much by refusing them the liberty to think, as by beguiling them into the belief of a farrago of

frivolous and monstrous fables. Only fix the trembling eyes of the credulous vulgar upon some grotesque divinity whose ugliness cannot endure the day, and then the people have become the creatures of the church. Why was it that the priests of the "ancient Egyptian church" seduced the people to the worship of monkeys, cats, crocodiles?—for the same reason which impelled the priests of a more modern church to propound tales of folly and wonder, which could neither please nor impose upon any but the abject:—tales, revolting alike to children and philosophers—grateful only to slaves.

The insidious endeavours now so diligently making on all sides of us, to prepare a way for the restoration of saint-worship, and the adoration of pictures and images, means nothing else than this. The people of England, not even its women, not the feeblest and most obsequious portion of the male sex, will ever be brought to bend again at the foot of a spiritual despotism, until, by long listening to fair speeches and fine poetry, and by gazing upon painted windows, wax candles, crimson curtains, and at the last "holy images," and by joining in modest invocations, they have been beguiled into polytheism, and an acquiescence in church fables. The moment of triumph will then have come; and all but infidels and obstinate dissidents (not that the former would much care to resist) would dutifully kneel while the yoke is put upon their necks; and then go away, delighted with some visionary assurance, or some sensible pledge of the peculiar favour of that most exalted of creatures—"the Queen of Heaven," toward themselves!

Is all this incredible, as likely to come about in England? Only ten years ago, the supposition would have been scouted as utterly absurd that an attempt should be made, within the protestant church, and should prosper, to restore the dark doctrines, the frauds, and the follies of the fourth century.

But we return to the movers of this scheme, and ask whether they themselves, while forging chains for the people, are free in soul? The mere facts forbid us to believe that they are. These learned persons, long before they broached the scheme for the restoration of church principles, had acquired (we are bound to suppose this) a familiar and extensive acquaintance with the

ecclesiastical remains of the early ages. Not to assume this, would be to throw upon them the heaviest possible imputation: for how could they, without the most culpable presumption, have come forward to recommend and restore that, concerning which, they were not themselves duly informed? We cannot admit any such supposition as this. They were then well versed in the patristic lore:—or let us only say, that they had repeatedly perused Basil, Ambrose, Gregory Nyssen, Ephraim Syrus, and Chrysostom. They therefore *distinctly knew*—they *individually knew*, ten years ago, or more, that these "fully instructed doctors" solemnly taught, and constantly practised the invocation of the saints, and that they instructed and exhorted the people, in the most emphatic manner, to have recourse to the relics of the martyrs, and to address their prayers to them, in every hour of trouble; and that they, on all occasions, encouraged their hearers to believe that these very relics, or the saints through them, had, when devoutly venerated, power to heal sicknesses, to restore sight, to raise the dead, to drive away demons, and to keep hosts of barbarians at bay.

These learned persons distinctly knew ten years ago, or more, that, in relation to saint-worship, and the veneration of relics, of crosses, and of "holy pictures," there is absolutely no difference between the Nicene divines, and those of the middle ages:—or that, if there be a difference, it is in favour of the latter, *who have been much more careful than were the former* to insist upon necessary distinctions, and to point out the bearings of latria, dulium, hyperdulium, and to protest against the imputation of idolatry:—and even this protest ought to be accepted as a testimony to truth.

And yet, knowing all this, and having the broad facts constantly before their eyes—the subjects of their daily and nightly studies, these learned persons have continued, through a course of years, and in every variety of phrase; in prose and in poetry; in treatises, in tracts, in reviews, in newspapers; through the press, from the pulpit, from the professor's chair; and in the privacies of common life, to speak of these very writers—naming them, and defining the period in which they flourished, as our best guides in theology, our patterns in religious sentiment, our teachers in

morals, our exemplars in liturgical offices, our masters in church polity :—as joint authorities with canonical Scripture; as authorities first and last to be listened to; and, very recently, as our sole and ultimate referees in all questions, moral, devotional, and ecclesiastical!

These facts, obvious and known to all who have looked into the writings in question, necessarily involve the further fact, that, notwithstanding some ambiguous exceptions reluctantly made, or some reserves, these divines acquiesce in the demonolatrous opinions and practices of the ancient church. They either acquiesce, or they disallow. If they disallow—the subject is so heavy a one, and it touches so intimately the question whether the ancient church was not apostate and adulterous, that a christian man's disapproval cannot be disguised, consistently with religious integrity : — conscience loudly demands, that, if we think it a corruption, we should distinctly denounce it as a far more fatal one than any other :—it is whoredom ; and must so be spoken of.

How then has it happened that men, surrounded by the light of Biblical principles, and not blinded by a training in idolatry from childhood, have brought themselves, or have been brought, to an acquiescence (whether active or passive) in abominations such as these? The explication of so strange a phenomenon, though not obvious to those who are not acquainted with ecclesiastical antiquity, presents itself to us, without a doubt, as soon as we set foot upon this awful ground.

— The first principle, or universal axiom of the modern revivers of church principles, is, The abjuration of that integrity of reason to which the inspired writers always appeal, and of which they enjoin the exercise and culture. In the place of an understanding, grounded and settled upon evidence, we are to cherish the sentiment of passivity. Instead of Faith, knowing why it believes to be true, and admits, what it cannot grasp ; we are to have an unquestioning credulity.—" To doubt is a sin." To adduce evidence, even in relation to common facts of history, and to judge of it according to the common rules of historical inquiry is to be " a rationalist." To distrust the pretensions of St. Dunstan, or the genuineness of the " true Cross," is an offence as grievous as to reject the Trinity : both are—*disobedience*.

With these guiding principles, and with this temper, let any one spend his days and nights in the perusal of the church writers of the fourth century. Whereas the earlier writers advance either no pretensions to miraculous powers, or such only as are ambiguous, and may easily be understood on the supposition of weakness of judgment, and the credulity of the age, these later writers affirm miraculous agencies of that sort to which no such explication can be applied;—miracles which, if not real, were impious frauds. Again, these miracles were all wrought, or nearly so, in attestation of the two great articles of the nicene system—monkery and demonolatry. The dead were seldom raised, except to establish the saintship of an anchoret in the wilderness, or the virtues of a martyr in the skies.

With minds prepared, as we have supposed, to believe, and never to examine, the ascetic doctrine of the ancient church, as well as its demonolatry, stands boldly forward as supernaturally sanctioned by Heaven. If it was not so, then what was the church, and what were the churchmen of that era? Whoever will remand common sense, for a season, and will give himself fairly up to the continued perusal of church legends, may easily come to believe them, one and all, to be true. After a little while, it will not be the most monstrous, or the most ridiculous of these fabrications, that will shock the mind. Gregory of Tours will be found as edifying a writer as the evangelists. Reason, once shamefully violated, scorns to complain of any new outrage.

In a word, the supernatural portion of the nicene literature, has been, we do not doubt, accepted as genuine by the modern admirers of antiquity;—for, had it been rejected, the Fathers themselves must have been condemned: but if this supernatural portion be genuine, then the worship of the saints and Virgin, and the veneration of relics, holy pictures, and images, stand before us, awfully approved by God himself! Religious practices, and a scheme of worship, sternly denounced, under every disguise, by the ancient prophets, are restored in the nicene church, under the sanction, not of now and then a prodigy; but of a broad and deep stream of miracles, flowing on from year to year—from day to day! This attestation being

accepted, all is accepted, necessarily, to which it originally attached.—Saint-worship, as well as asceticism, are then the "fully developed" christianity which it is our part to receive!

It does not appear at what point we can find a way of escape from this conclusion, in stating the case of those who have deliberately and repeatedly appealed to the nicene authorities—yet well knowing what those authorities actually recommend, and on what ground of miraculous attestation, they so enjoin these things.

But we have now to advert to the consequence, as affecting the present controversy (so far as it is touched in these numbers). Every writer who engages in controversy, being himself sincerely convinced that he has truth on his side, does so with a natural, though vague expectation, that he may not merely confirm those who already think with him, but even convince his opponents; or silence them; or at least wring from them some sort of concession, or compromise: but let it be especially noted that the peculiar nature of the case precludes any such expectations in the present instance. There can be no concession, or partial agreement, where the question at issue turns upon the reality of a miraculous dispensation. There is an ominous vitality attaching to a controversy of this kind, which, while it carries a fearful consequence, affecting the one, or the other of the combatants, peremptorily forbids their coming to any sort of compromise. I must plainly acknowledge myself to perceive this irreconcileable difference much more clearly than I did when I first engaged in the argument; and this has arisen from a more mature consideration of the real position of the advocates of church principles, as having necessarily yielded their assent to the supernatural claims of the ancient church.

To look no further than to the few passages that have been cited in this number.—These, as well as a hundred others of like quality, have been deliberately perused by my opponents; and must have been accepted as good and true. But as the entire system of Saint-worship stands flagrantly opposed both to the letter, and to the spirit of the Scriptures, this assent can rest upon no other basis than that of miracles—miracles to countervail miracles. And that this assent to the supernatural attestations of demonolatry, has actually been accorded, we are compelled to

assume; inasmuch as the alternative involves the heavy condemnation of the very authorities whose claims to reverent submission are now so solemnly asserted. We are surely not to be sent to learn our religion from men, confessed to have been dealers in false miracles.

Therefore, as it would be idle to think of being able to modify, either by argument or evidence, opinions such as those now in debate, the only course is to turn, at once, toward those readers with whom evidence and argument may yet avail. There are many who will not soon bring themselves to believe, that, for authenticating the worship of the dead, and the veneration of relics and images, God—the avenger of ancient idolatry, vouchsafed a perpetual series of miracles! To such persons therefore I now appeal; and, in concluding this branch of the argument, shall state the case as it bears upon the HYPOTHESIS OF CHURCH PRINCIPLES; and in doing so, shall think myself free to lay aside the logical severity which might be intended to compel the submission of an adversary; and instead, shall suppose myself to be addressing a friend. Let it then be candidly considered whether we have any choice, other than among the following alternatives.—

The DEMONOLATRY, in its various branches, which universally prevailed in the (so called) christian church, during, and throughout, the Fourth Century, and from that time onward, was either—

I. THE PRODUCT OF THAT AGE; or,

II. IT HAD COME DOWN FROM AN EARLIER PERIOD.

We will assume, then, *first*—That it was the product of that age—namely of the Fourth Century. But if so, it had either been

(*a*) RIGHTFULLY ENACTED, by an authority, competent to that extent; or,

ii. (*b*) IT WAS AN UNWARRANTED INVENTION, and a corrupt addition to Apostolic Christianity.

a. But if rightfully enacted by a competent authority, then it demands our submission; and especially as it was attested by a course of miracles, which, *on this supposition*, are not to be

called in question. The modern protestant church, therefore, must be regarded as having placed itself in direct opposition to a Divine Economy; and moreover the Theory of the papacy is established. But on the contrary—

b. If this Demonolatry was an unwarranted invention, and a corruption—the joint progeny of superstition and fraud, then—

— The miracles by which it was attested were no miracles, but lying wonders:

— The divines and writers who had a guilty participation in this scheme of delusion and whoredom, are the last men to be looked up to as authorities in religion, morals, or ecclesiastical discipline:

— The modern endeavour to reinstate the Nicene system, and to supplant the Reformation, is a treason, which, if it succeed, must be fatal to the church that favours it.

But we now take in hand the second supposition; namely, that—

THIS DEMONOLATRY, whether in itself good or bad, HAD DESCENDED, in its rudiments at least, FROM AN EARLIER AGE; and that the divines of the fourth century, favoured by the new circumstances of the church, did nothing more than amplify that which, with a belief of its good quality, and a knowledge of its antiquity, they had inherited from their predecessors, of the Martyr church.

On this supposition we may first (and to fill up our hypothetical synopsis) assume that the ancient Demonolatry, in its rudiments, was indeed—

i. AN APOSTOLIC TRADITION, or a genuine portion of that orally conveyed Truth which a faithful church had conserved, and had transmitted in a whisper, to a time when it might be happily expanded, and elaborated, in the worship and devotional practices of the faithful. On this supposition, again, the modern Protestant church must be granted to be grievously at fault, and should lose no time in returning to the "old paths." But on the contrary, we must consider the correlative supposition, namely,—

ii. That the ancient demonolatry, whencesoever it might first

have arisen, or at what time soever it appeared, was A CORRUPTION, fatal in its intrinsic quality, and in its inevitable tendency; and such a corruption as must bring under the heaviest suspicion whatever it has been associated with. Now in *this case* it presents itself as an instance conclusively repelling the HYPOTHESIS of church principles, inasmuch as (by the terms of the supposition) it possesses all those characteristics of high and undefined antiquity, and of universal acceptance, which belong to notions and practices also alleged to be Apostolic Traditions; although they are not to be gathered from the canon of Scripture.

I now leave it with the candid and friendly reader to analyse, with all due strictness, this synopsis of alternatives, and to detect, if such there be, any flaws, or inconsequential assumptions which it may contain.

Many readers—and those, I believe, the most sound-minded, will already have said, without waiting for the deduction of an inference in form,—"It is enough. The Fathers, whatever may be their merits, shall never be constituted our guides or authorities in questions of faith, worship, or morals.—Writers who, from whatever causes, explicitly taught, and constantly practised —the invocation of the dead—the appeal to the dead as mediators between Christ and the church, together with the abject veneration of relics, and of other symbols—such writers, it may be useful, or perhaps necessary, to peruse, but it must be in the last degree dangerous to listen to them with a submissive reverence."

A decision such as this, I am fully persuaded, will be promptly assented to by every reader whose heart has admitted the first principles of Scriptural piety, and who is alive to the realities of a spiritual communion with God. In the view of such a mind—I mean in the view of every spiritually-informed christian, the doctrine of the Mediatorial office and Intercessory work of Christ occupies a place which sternly excludes the remotest approach of the doctrine of the intercession of the Virgin, or of departed saints and martyrs. And such a mind rejects, as by instinct, the foolish extenuations that have been, and are now offered in defence of these blasphemous corruptions: nor does it wait to look abroad

for evidence touching the degrading paganism for which that doctrine has uniformly made way.

If we have learned our religion from Christ and his Apostles, we do not need to be told that, where the people have been taught to present their supplications to "the indulgent Mother," and to make saints and martyrs their Deprecators, and to confide in the powers of crossings—crosses, and holy bones—there, every characteristic of polytheism invariably presents itself. All this is indeed mournfully true, but apart from the knowledge of it the christian heart spurns these infernal delusions at the very instant of hearing them propounded, and it does so with a mingled emotion of contempt, indignation, and dread. They are errors than which none can be of worse, or of more certain ill consequence—they are errors (and this can be said of few) pure of every alleviating admixture of truth;—errors which, like some poisons, are of mortal efficacy, even administered in the minutest quantities.

Let any one make the actual trial.—If the practices so warmly, nay, so passionately recommended by the great divines of the Nicene church, be indeed intrinsically good—or even if they be harmless, they may be adopted by ourselves.—Let a devout christian man, who hitherto has worshipped God after the pattern of the Scriptures (and as taught by the Reformers) let him condemn himself to the experiment, for a year, of looking, as *foremost*, to the Virgin; or let him select his Saint from the calendar, and no longer daring to draw near to the throne of Grace, implore the patronage of—whom he pleases!—For a year, do we say? a week, a day, of such worship would be enough to alienate the heart, and to wither, as with a honey-dew, every holy affection! But not so soon affrighted, he goes on to stimulate his now palsied piety, by palpable and visible excitements:—he procures, *he buys*, a "virgin and child," whether image or picture, and a crucifix too, and a bit of St. Joseph's saw:—wax candles are lit—and curtains are doubled—and offices are repeated—and the lash is used! Melancholy process for poisoning the soul! The man is devout indeed—more so than many, but his spiritual condition has become incomparably worse than that of the better-minded pagans of antiquity.

I have said—Let a christian man put himself under such a training.—No *such* person will ever incur a risk so terrible of immortal ruin! Alas! that hundreds of those who are entering the christian ministry, within the protestant church, at this moment, should be receiving their earliest religious excitements from the lips and example of teachers, who, themselves misguided by their regard to adulterous antiquity, are leading on in this very path of superstition—"a way that seemeth right unto a man," although "the end thereof be death."

ANCIENT CHRISTIANITY;

No. 7,

THE MIRACLES OF THE NICENE CHURCH

IN ATTESTATION OF ITS DEMONOLATRY.

WITH A SUPPLEMENT.

LONDON:—JACKSON AND WALFORD.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY R. CLAY, BREAD STREET HILL.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE SEVENTH NUMBER.

TWELVE months have elapsed since the publication of the preceding Number of this work. This delay has given me much uneasiness; and I have feared lest some, even of my friendly readers, should impute it to a wrong cause.—It has arisen simply from the pressure and variety of the labours which fill my days, and engage my thoughts. The pages of the present Number have in fact been prepared in hours snatched from pursuits which might well have warranted my devoting them to rest or relaxation.

I yet humbly hope that, notwithstanding circumstances so unfavourable, the evidence collected in the present Number will not be found liable to any material exceptions. I do not say this with any wish to elude fair criticism: as to frivolous cavils, they give me no sort of concern; on the contrary, I accept them as proof that my critics feel themselves compelled to resort to such means for blinding their readers.

The main facts adduced in these pages are not to be disputed; and they are of a kind, I must plainly say, which demands the most serious regard of those who, at this moment, are allowing themselves to be led away, in the dark, toward the worst enormities of polytheism and idolatry, thinly disguised under the veil of a regard to "primitive catholicity."

Let those who have subscribed the Thirty-nine Articles, and who assent to the Homilies, inform themselves what this ill-omened deference to antiquity involves!

Earnestly desirous as I am of quitting myself speedily of my task, I propose taking up one topic only of those which I had at first contemplated: this is—The Deference rendered by the English Reformers to the Fathers, and to the Ancient Church. It will then only remain for me to reply to the objections which have been urged against what I have written.

STANFORD RIVERS,
November 16, 1841.

ERRATUM.

Page 315, line 6 from the bottom, *for* inferential queries *read* inferences.

CONTENTS OF THE SEVENTH NUMBER.

	PAGE
The Nicene Miracles determinative of the Present Controversy . . .	233
The Unknown Martyrs of Milan	242
The Bleeding Relics of St. Euphemia	272
The Invention of the Cross, and the Miracles therewith connected . .	277
Relics of St. Stephen, Proto-Martyr	316
Reasons for Rejecting the Nicene Miracles	356
Import of the Twenty-second of the Thirty-nine Articles	366

CONTENTS OF THE SUPPLEMENT.

	PAGE
Epistle of Ambrose to his Sister	xli
A Resurrection, from Cassian	xliii
Citations from Evagrius	xliv
Epistle of Paulinus to Severus	*ibid.*
Citation from Paulinus	xlvii
Sources of the Evidence touching the Relics of St. Stephen	*ibid.*

No. 7.] *Price 2s. 6d.*

ANCIENT CHRISTIANITY,

&c. &c.

THE NICENE MIRACLES DETERMINATIVE OF THE PRESENT CONTROVERSEY.

THE great controversy which divides the church at the present moment has been reduced within much narrower limits than before, by the appearance of the Ninetieth Tract for the Times, and by the publications which have followed on the same side. An abbreviated line of argument may therefore now be sufficient for carrying it on toward the only termination of which it is susceptible—namely, a well-understood conviction, on both sides, that the difference it involves affects THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF; and that, in the nature of the case, there can be no room for a middle opinion, or for a neutral position, between the adherents of BIBLICAL, and of PATRISTIC CHRISTIANITY. This great divulsion of the professedly christian world, occasioned at the moment by the tardy, and yet too early, avowal of long reserved opinions, must in the end prove more decisive than it may at first appear, inasmuch as it leads to an appeal, on the one side, to an extra-biblical authority, which, as it is alleged to be MIRACULOUSLY SUSTAINED, must therefore oblige the other party to examine, and, if to examine—necessarily to reject these pretensions.

In any instance in which a religious body, or church so called, advances a formal, open, and continuous claim to the possession of miraculous powers, which are alleged to attest the doctrine and practices peculiar to it, as of divine authority, no other line of

argument should be pursued, on either side, than that which tends either to establish, or to subvert this pretension. For if miracles are professed to be wrought, which, from the circumstances, must either be divine interpositions, or deliberate frauds, then, in the one case, resistance is impiety: or, in the other, this church should be altogether denounced as a blasphemous usurpation.

In bringing the controversy to this issue, we are willing to exempt from scrutiny all *ambiguous* instances, in which the reputation of the parties concerned may possibly be saved by making very large allowances for illusions of the imagination, and for the blinding influence of firmly held fanatical opinions. We moreover exclude all *obscure* instances; that is to say, such as have been matters only of popular belief, or of local superstition. But we assume as fit for our argumentative purpose, those cases that have undergone formal examination by church authorities; and have been either solemnly vouched for by those authorities, or repeated and accredited by persons of the highest consideration in the Church;—and these, uncontradicted by its public organs.

It is clear that, unless by the means of a sufficient examination of the evidence, we feel satisfied that these pretensions are ill founded, and the alleged miracles spurious, we cannot maintain our protestantism. But, on the other hand, if we do maintain our separation, it must be on the ground that the nicene church and the papacy have, in so supporting themselves by forged miracles, filled up their predicted characteristics,—the former as the 'Apostasy,' and the latter as the Power, that should oppress the True Church, through a long tract of time, until at last it be overthrown by a signal manifestation of the divine displeasure.

The Church of Rome, in appealing to miracles, is either what it professes to be—the true and *only* church of Christ;—or it is the subject of those prophetic passages of the New Testament which describe the antichristian despotism.

But the question cannot be evaded—When were these pretensions first advanced, and by whom? and if advanced at an early time, and continued, without a break, when did they cease to be valid, and when become factitious and fraudulent?

These inquiries are manifestly decisive in their bearing upon

the present controversy, which turns upon the opinion we should entertain of the ecclesiastical system and practices of the Nicene era.

Now, whereas the alleged supernatural occurrences related, or appealed to, by the *earlier* christian writers, are all, or nearly all, of an ambiguous kind, and such as may, with little difficulty, be understood without either the assumption of miraculous interpositions, or the imputation of deliberate fraud; it is altogether otherwise with the miracles of the church of the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries.

From the period of the Nicene council, and onward, miracles of the most astounding kind were alleged to be wrought from day to day, and openly, and in all quarters of the christian world. These wonders were solemnly appealed to, and seriously narrated by the leading persons of the church, eastern and western; and in many instances these very persons—the great men now set up in opposition to the leaders of the Reformation, were themselves the wonder-workers, and have themselves transmitted the accounts of them.

But then these alleged miracles were, *almost in every instance*, wrought expressly in support of those very practices and opinions which stand forward as the points of contrast, distinguishing Romanism from Protestantism. We refer especially to—the ascetic life—the supernatural properties of the eucharistic elements—the invocation of the saints, or direct praying to them, and the efficacy of their relics; and the reverence or worship due to certain visible and palpable religious symbols.

This being the case before us, the question concerning the genuineness or spuriousness of the miracles of the Nicene church, touches closely our consciences as protestants; and it ought to be regarded as decisive in respect of the controversy moved by the Oxford Tract writers. It will be seen from the circumstances connected with these pretensions, that they leave no room for an evasion of the inquiry, or for holding the inference thence arising, in abeyance.

Nor can we reasonably decline this scrutiny on the plea that the evidence to be examined is too obscure, or remote, or imperfect, to admit of any satisfactory conclusion concerning it, on either side; and therefore that it should be passed over as not

available in argument. We shall find this not to be the fact: or, if it were admitted, consistency would compel us thenceforward to abstain altogether from every argumentative reference to supernatural events. Let it be well observed that, at the moment when we consent to waive inquiry concerning the Nicene miracles, we virtually abandon the historical argument in support of Christianity itself, and must henceforth be willing to rest our religious faith on the mere word of the Church, exercising no discrimination as to the marvellous; for the Church, if she does not distinctly vouch for all as true, throws her mantle over all, and excludes doubt, by prohibiting inquiry, and by denouncing Reason as her eternal enemy.

It is well that we should look before us on this ground; and consider the consequences of the course we adopt. Insulated instances of apparently supernatural agency may be dismissed as not susceptible of any conclusive treatment. But not so A MIRACULOUS DISPENSATION, running on through a long course of time, and under which 'mighty signs and wonders' are wrought, or alleged to be wrought, from year to year, and are vouched for by authorities, and narrated by men of understanding. Now, if once we grant it to be impracticable to arrive at any certain conclusion as to the reality or spuriousness of such a miraculous dispensation—long continued and widely extended, and if we admit that, after the lapse of time, it ceases to be possible to discriminate the genuine interpositions of Heaven, from the frauds of impostors, then how shall we any longer maintain an argument with infidels on the ground of the miracles recorded in the New Testament? An admission such as this involves nothing less than a surrender of Christianity to infidelity.

But if the christian evidences are to be preserved, and if they may yet be confidently appealed to as historically certain; then is it of the highest importance to exhibit the contrast which presents itself, when the christian miracles are compared with the tricks and juggles and 'lying wonders' of an apostate church. The infidel would gladly confound the two, that he may evade the consequence resulting from the truth of the former.—Romanists, and with them the modern restorers of antiquity, are not less anxious to prevent any such discrimination, knowing well that the con-

trast, when fully set forth, must be fatal to the reputation of the church they profess to follow.

In times like these, no course can more certainly promote infidelity than that pursued by those who allow it to be believed —if they do not distinctly affirm it—that they accept as true the miracles of the ancient church, and of the papacy. Men of education, and whose minds are not enslaved, knowing well that these legends are utterly insufferable, and yet finding them to be mixed up, by churchmen, with those of the evangelic history, as being all of the same quality, will draw only one conclusion, and will silently, if not openly, reject whatever professes to be supernatural.

On the other hand, men of infirm and abject temper (and how many women!) being taught, or obliquely encouraged to believe, that miracles are *miracles*, whenever reported and asseverated by eminent doctors, will find themselves carried, by this implicit faith, into the arms of the Romish Church. If the Nicene miracles are good, the Romish miracles are good also, nay better; and if so, then—"out of the Romish Church there is no salvation."

An instance will best exhibit the drift and meaning of our present argument;—and a recent publication affords as apt an instance as can be desired.

The able and learned author of the 'Treatise on the Church of Christ,' in his late conclusive replies to Dr. Wiseman, fastens upon the authorities of the Romish Church, at the present moment, the heavy guilt of encouraging the gross idolatry of the people; and that by means the most nefarious; and of which he adduces an example from the life of St. Alphonsus Liguori, not long ago canonized; and of which life Dr. Wiseman is reputed to be the editor. The reader will bear this instance in mind, when similar cases are adduced from an earlier age.

"Whilst he (this saint Alphonsus) was preaching on the patronage of the blessed Virgin, and exciting his hearers to recur with confidence to her in all their wants, he suddenly exclaimed, 'Oh, you are too cold in praying to our blessed Lady! I will pray to her for you!' He knelt down in the attitude of prayer, with his eyes raised to heaven, and was seen by all present lifted more than a foot from the ground, and turned towards a statue of the

blessed Virgin, near the pulpit. The countenance of our Lady (the statue) darted forth beams of light, which shone upon the face of the ecstatic Alphonsus. This spectacle lasted about five or six minutes, during which the people cried out, 'Mercy! mercy! a miracle! a miracle!' and every one burst into a flood of tears. But the saint rising up, exclaimed in a loud voice; 'Be glad, for the blessed Virgin has granted your prayer.'"*

Of this instance of fraud and impiety the learned writer who cites it so aptly, in confuting his Romanist antagonist, speaks in terms of merited indignation and abhorrence. But let us well consider what are the inevitable inferences if we thus dismiss this alleged miracle.—The writer not only denounces the idolatry of this address to the Virgin, but he scouts the miracle which had been produced on the occasion. But this miracle, precisely similar as it is to hundreds on record in ecclesiastical literature, was of a kind which (if it were not a miracle indeed) could not have been exhibited without a well-adjusted apparatus, and much adroit management on the part of the actors, among whom the saint himself was the chief juggler; for the whole must have been concerted to a moment, and when he was lifted from the floor of the pulpit, he must well have known on what he knelt, and by what mechanical means his stool was raised.

Now we ask, in the first place, whether the fact of thus contriving and executing 'a miracle!' leaves the religious reputation of the actors untouched? We presume that it does not, and that men so lost to all sense of truth and piety are deserving, if not of contempt and abhorrence—of profound pity, as the victims of a system which itself is ineffably wicked.

But then the church authorities who were, and are always, well informed of the mode in which such miracles are wont to be got up (having themselves, individually, often performed their part in similar exhibitions) solemnly sanction, at once the idolatry, and the fraud. Does then such a course of impiety, steadily and systematically pursued by a hierarchy, leave the religious repute of the church in the name of which they act, untouched? We presume it does not; but that a church thus acting *constantly*, and *on principle*, is to be denounced as Satan's synagogue.

* A Letter to N. Wiseman, D.D. by the Rev. William Palmer, M.A. p. 21.

This might most safely be concluded on general grounds. But if there could be any doubt, it would be removed by the fact that such idolatries, sustained by such frauds, are distinctly predicted as the marks of that apostate ecclesiastical Power which should oppress Christ's true church through a long tract of time. To these manifest tokens of the Papacy, as Christ's enemy, and whom he has foredoomed to sudden destruction, PROTESTANTS have not scrupled to appeal, as warrant enough for their separation from a communion so corrupt.

But now, THE VERY SAME IMPIETIES, promoted among the people by miracles of the very same stamp, and solemnly appealed to by the highest authorities in the church, belong to the FOURTH, FIFTH, and SIXTH centuries; to which times, and to the persons of which times, we are referred for guidance in doctrine and worship!

Inasmuch as those who profess a religious adherence to antiquity have, from the first, well known that the opinions and practices which they wish to restore, were introduced on the authority of a system of miracles, real or pretended, they must be understood to have admitted the reality of such miracles. For, if spurious, they were not *illusions*; but must have been frauds deliberately contrived; and if so, then, not only do the doctrine and worship in behalf of which they were devised lose their only ground of authority; but the persons who were the guilty promoters of these impositions forfeit every claim to our respect, and stand condemned, not merely as ill-judging, but as unworthy and irreligious men. Moreover, if these miracles were spurious, then they serve *to mark the church* which appealed to and promoted them, as the apostate Power which was to maintain its tyranny by all 'deceivableness of unrighteousness.'

The question before us is therefore in the strictest sense *conclusive* as to the modern controversy concerning church principles, and the authority of tradition. If the miracles of the fourth century, and those which follow in the same track, were real, then protestantism is altogether indefensible, and ought to be denounced as an impiety of the most flagrant kind. But if these miracles were wicked frauds; and if they were the first in the series of a system of impious delusion—then, not only is the modern papacy to be

condemned, but the church of the fourth century must be condemned with it; and for the same reasons; and the Reformation is to be adhered to as the emancipation of christendom from the thraldom of him who is 'the father of lies.'

The several grounds on which we altogether reject the pretended miracles of the Nicene church, I shall distinctly state in winding up my argument; but shall first put the reader in a position for forming his own opinion on the subject, by adducing a variety of samples of these venerable legends, drawn from 'the most authentic sources;'—that is to say, from the undoubted writings of the bishops and orators of the times in question.

A question concerning those obscure and ambiguous instances of *illusion*, of which the most upright and even strong-minded men have sometimes been the subjects, must be regarded as interminable and useless. We have no leisure to clear up the difficulties that may attach to cases in which a good man, in superstitious times, may have dreamed, or may have seen in ecstasy, what seems to imply supernatural agency: all such instances we leave untouched, while we labour to ascertain *the historical quality* of narrations which, throughout, are of a palpable kind;—the facts alleged being such as are interpretable only on one of two suppositions—that of a miraculous interposition, or of a wicked imposture.

Thus the elevation of St. Alphonsus from the ground, while praying to the Virgin, and the illumination of his face by a radiation from that of the image, were either miraculously produced; or they were effected as a juggler's tricks are;—and this with the impious intention to ape a manifestation of Almighty Power, for the support of a profitable superstition!

And in like manner, in the instances we are about to adduce, we must—if the narrative itself be not altogether factitious—a supposition fatal to the reputation of the writer; we must either believe the miracle, or must denounce the parties concerned in it as impostors:—unless we believe the worship of the Virgin to have been recommended by a miracle—then St. Alphonsus and his accomplices were jugglers; and the Romish authorities appointed to examine, with the utmost rigour, the proofs of his saintship, gave their sanction to what they must have known

to be fraudulent. As to the immediate reporter of the alleged facts, he is personally responsible for circulating and recommending the acts of his church, knowing of what quality they are. If St. Alphonsus be acquitted—the church is condemned. Most persons will feel little hesitation in condemning as parties in this flagitious imposture—St. Alphonsus—and his abettors—and the Romish authorities; barely saving the reputation of the intelligent and *well-informed* editor, whoever he may be.

There are those, probably, who would discharge the subject on the assumption that, as there have been weak men in every age, too ready to receive or propagate tales of wonder, instances of this kind, adduced from the fourth century, or from any other, have little or no argumentative value—any more than as if some extravagances which have been noised in our own times, were brought forward as characteristic of the age, and as condemnatory of the modern church at large. It will be seen that there is no room for any such evasion on the present occasion.—We bring forward the most prominent, and the most intelligent persons of the period in question; and we bring them forward deliberately reporting public transactions in which themselves were concerned, more or less directly, and which were—not single or rare occurrences, but samples of what was happening frequently, or constantly, and in all quarters of the christian world.

We begin with Ambrose of Milan, and no man of his times stands higher in repute; and we possess his own relation of circumstances which are of a kind that excludes ambiguity, and which must be regarded as decisive, on the one side or the other, of our present argument. The reader shall have before him all the *contemporary* evidence, relating to the instance now to be adduced; and perhaps a thorough examination of this one, which combines every circumstance most characteristic of the times in question, will, with many readers, be decisive for the purpose we have in view.

THE UNKNOWN MARTYRS OF MILAN.

(The epistle entire, with the discourse addressed by the bishop to the people, as reported by himself, is here presented, lest it should be thought that the portions omitted contained qualifying sentiments, which might affect our opinions of the whole.)

EPIST. XXII. CLAS. I. tom ii.

"To the Lady, his sister, dearer than life and eyesight, a brother [sends greeting].

"Since I never conceal from your Sanctity any thing which takes place here in your absence, you must know that we have actually discovered some holy martyrs. For when I should consecrate the church, the multitude began with one voice to demand that it should be dedicated in the same manner as the Roman church.* To which I replied, that I would do so if I could find any martyr's relics: and instantly felt an ardent presentiment of what was to happen.

"Why should I make a long story of it? God has granted us the favour. Notwithstanding the diffidence of the clergy, I commanded the earth to be removed from the space before the rails where rest St. Felix, and St. Nabor. I recognised the appropriate tokens; and, some persons being presented for the imposition of hands, the holy martyrs began so to bestir themselves, that before I had yet spoken, an urn was snatched up, and thrown down on the place of the holy sepulture. We found two men of extraordinary size, such as a former age has produced: all the bones entire, and plenty of blood. There was a great concourse of people during two days. To be brief, we covered all up in due order, and when evening had closed in, removed them to the church of Fausta, where vigils were kept all night and imposition of hands. The following day we transferred them to the church which they call the Ambrosian; and while we were removing them a blind man was cured. My discourse to the people was of the following kind:—

"When I considered the overflowing and unusual concourse of people on this occasion, as well as those gifts of divine grace

* A church near the Roman gate in Milan.

which have shone forth in the holy martyrs, I confess that I judged myself unequal to the task that devolves upon me; nor did it seem possible that I should give utterance in words to that which my mind can scarcely grasp, or my eye steadily gaze at. But in the reading of the scripture lessons, the Holy Spirit, who spake by the Prophets, was bestowed, by whose aid I may offer you something worthy of such an assembly, of your expectations, and of the virtues of the holy martyrs.

"'The heavens,' it is said, 'declare the glory of God.' While this Psalm has been read, it has struck me that it is not material elements so well as heavenly virtues which may worthily proclaim the glory of God. But in its happening to be read to-day, it became clear, what those heavens are which declare the glory of God. Look on the right hand, see on my left, the inviolable relics! observe the men of celestial conversation! mark the trophies of the lofty mind! These are the 'heavens' which 'declare the glory of God;'—these 'the works of his hand' which 'the firmament proclaims.' For not by any worldly allurement, but by the grace of divine operation, they were exalted to the firmament of most consecrated suffering; and long since by the proofs of their manners and virtues, has their martyrdom borne witness of them, that, in the midst of an inconstant world, they maintained their steadfastness.

"Paul was a 'heaven,' who said, 'Our conversation is in heaven.' James and John were 'heavens;' whence they were called 'Sons of thunder:' and so, like a 'heaven,' John saw 'the Word with God.' The Lord Jesus himself was a 'heaven' of perpetual light, when he declared the glory of God, such glory as none had seen before. Hence he says 'No man hath seen God at any time. The only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.' And if you would see the 'handy work' of God also, listen to the words of Job, 'The Spirit of the Lord which hath made me.' And thus strengthened to resist the temptations of the devil, he held on his way with unwavering constancy. But let us proceed:—

"'Day unto day,' it is said, 'uttereth the word.' Behold the true days [the martyrs] obscured by no night! Behold the true days, full of eternal light and brightness, which 'utter the word'

of God, not by perfunctory speech; but with their inmost heart, by their constancy in confession [of his name] and perseverance in martyrdom.

"Another Psalm was read which says, 'Who is like to the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, and beholdeth that which is lowly in heaven and in earth?' Truly God beholds what is lowly, since he has revealed to his church the relics of the holy martyrs, which lay hid under the common sod: their souls indeed were in heaven; but their bodies were in the earth. 'He lifteth the needy out of the dust, and raiseth up the poor from the dunghill;' —even these, as you see, 'that he may set them with the princes of his people.' Whom ought we to consider 'the princes of the people,' if it be not the holy martyrs, among the number of whom, Protasius and Gervasius, long unknown, are now promoted? and by their names, and examples, as of her own suffering, they have now made the Milanese church, heretofore barren as to martyrs, rejoice as the mother of many sons.

"Nor is this at variance with the true faith.—'Day unto day uttereth the word;' soul to soul; life to life; resurrection to resurrection. 'And night unto night showeth knowledge;' that is, flesh to flesh, whose suffering has shown to all the true knowledge of faith. Fine nights! Bright starlight nights! 'For as star differeth from star in splendour, so also is the resurrection of the dead.'

"Not inappropriately then do many call this the resurrection of the martyrs. We shall see whether it be as to themselves; for certainly as to us, the martyrs have risen. You have known, yes, yourselves have seen many freed from demons; and very many also relieved from the infirmities under which they had laboured, by applying their hands to the pall of the saints. The miracles of old time, when grace was more abundantly bestowed on the earth by the coming of the Lord Jesus, are now revived; for you see many healed by the mere shadow of the saints' bodies. How many kerchiefs are tossed about! How many coverlets of the inviolable relics are sought for, as having become, by mere contact, capable of curing disease! All are eager to touch [even] the outermost fringe, and whoever touches will be healed.

"I thank thee, O Lord Jesus, that, at this time when thy church

needs greater safeguards, thou hast raised up such spirits of holy martyrs. Let all understand what sort of champions it is that I desire; even such as will defend, but are not wont to attack. Such I have obtained for you, O holy people, who may be profitable to all, but injure none. Such are the defenders I sue for, such are the soldiers I covet [or have]:—not the world's soldiers, but Christ's soldiers. No ill-will do I fear on account of such: whose patronage is so much the safer, as it is of higher quality. I wish their help even on behalf of those who grudge me the possession of them. Let them come now and see my body-guards! With such arms I do not deny that I am surrounded. 'Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we shall be magnified in the name of the Lord our God.'

"The scripture narrative relates that when Elisha was besieged by the Syrian army, he said, to calm the fears of his affrighted servant, 'There are more for us, than against us.' And to prove that it was so, he prayed that the eyes of Gehazi might be opened: on which he saw innumerable hosts of angels round about the prophet. We too feel them, although we cannot see them. These eyes of ours were shut, as long as the bodies of the saints lay concealed; but the Lord opened our eyes, and we have seen the helpers by whom we have so often been defended. We did not see these; but we had them nevertheless. It is as if the Lord said to us, in our present alarm, 'See what noble martyrs I have given you.' So with open eyes we behold the glory of the Lord, past indeed in the martyrs' suffering; but present still in their operations. We have escaped, brethren, from no small burden of shame; for although we had patrons, we did not know it. This one thing we discover, in which we may seem to surpass our predecessors; for we have attained to the knowledge of the holy martyrs, which they had lost.

"The noble relics are rescued from the ignoble sepulchre, and the trophies are displayed to the heavens:—the grave moistened with blood!—the stains of triumphal gore apparent!—the inviolable relics found in their proper place and order—the head separated from the shoulders! The aged are now recollecting whether they have ever heard the names, or read the record of these martyrs. But the city which had seized on the martyrs of other

places, had lost her own. And though this is God's gift, I cannot deny the grace bestowed by the Lord Jesus on the period of my priesthood, that, although I deserve not to be a martyr myself, I should have obtained these martyrs for you!

"Let the triumphal victims occupy the place where Christ is the sacrifice. He *on* the altar, who suffered for all; they *under* it, who are redeemed by his suffering! It is the place I had intended for myself; for it is meet that the priest should repose where he had been accustomed to offer: but I yield to the sacred victims the portion on the right, as the martyrs' due. Let us therefore now enclose the most hallowed relics, and convey them to a worthy habitation, and faithfully devote the whole day to their honour.

"The people demanded with acclamations that the enshrining of the martyrs should be postponed till the (next) Lord's-day; but they at length consented that it should take place on the morrow, when my address to the people was of this kind:—

"Yesterday I handled, to the best of my ability, the verse, 'Day unto day uttereth speech.' To-day it appears to me that the holy Scripture prophesied not only of past time, but of the present. For when I see your holy throng continuing night and day, the oracles of prophetic song declare that such days as yesterday and to-day are those of which it is most fitly said, 'Day unto day uttereth speech;' and that of such nights as these it is most correctly affirmed, that 'night unto night showeth knowledge.' For, what have you been uttering with the deepest emotion for the last two days, but 'the word' of God, and proving yourselves to possess the 'knowledge' of faith?

But there are those who, as usual, look with an evil eye on this concourse, and because their envious tempers cannot endure it, they hate that on account of which you are assembled. Nay, to such a height does their madness reach, that they even deny the merits of the martyrs, whose powers the demons themselves confess! But it is no wonder; for such is the falseness of unbelievers, that one may better take the confession of the devil. For the devil said, 'Jesus, thou Son of the living God, why hast thou come to torment us before the time?' And yet when the Jews heard this, they still denied that he was the Son of God. And now

you hear demons crying out, and confessing to the martyrs, that they cannot bear their plagues, and saying, 'Why have you come here to torment us so grievously?' While the Arians say—'These are no martyrs; nor can they put the devil to the torture, nor set any one free'—and this, even when the tortures of the demons are confessed with their own voice; and the benefits conferred by the martyrs are manifested by the cures of those who have been healed, and by the declarations of those who have been liberated!

"They deny that a blind man has received his sight. But he does not deny himself to have been healed. *He* says, 'I see, who could not see.' *He* says, 'I am blind no longer;' and proves it by the fact: while they, unable to deny the fact, deny the cure. The man was well known—subsisting, while needful, on public charity—Severus by name—a butcher by trade. He had left his calling, in consequence of this impediment. He summons, as witnesses, those by whose alms he had been supported. He brings in those to prove his cure, who were witnesses and judges of his blindness. He roundly asserts that, at the moment when he touched the fringe of the pall that covered the sacred relics, his sight was restored to him.

"Does not this resemble what we read of in the Gospel? Now we praise the power of one and the same Author. Nor does it signify whether it be a work [immediate] or a function bestowed [on another]—for He must impart in working, and must work in imparting. For in what he has granted to be done by others, his own name has produced the effect. We read therefore in the Gospel, that the Jews, when they saw the cure which was wrought on the blind man, still required the testimony of his parents. They asked 'How does your son see?' after he had said, 'Whereas I was blind, now I see.' The man of whom we have been speaking says the same. 'I was blind, and now I see. Ask others, if you do not believe me.' Ask persons who have no connexion with us, lest you should suspect the parents of collusion. The pertinacity of such people is more detestable than that of the Jews. They, when they doubted, asked the parents; while these only ask privately, and then deny publicly; no longer incredulous as to the fact, but as to the Author.

"But what is it, I ask, that they disbelieve? Is it that any may be visited by the martyrs? This is to disbelieve Christ; for he himself said, 'Ye shall do greater things than these.' Or—by these martyrs, whose merits are at length brought to light and whose bodies are now at length found? But here I would be glad to know whether it is against me, or the holy martyrs that they entertain this grudge? If against me—then I ask, are any miracles wrought by me, or by my own power, or in my own name? Why then should they envy me what is not mine? But if it be the martyrs, (for if it be not myself, it must seem to be the martyrs that they envy,) they thereby show that these martyrs were of another faith than themselves. Otherwise they would not envy them their works, unless they judged them possessors of a faith which *they* hold not: *that* faith, established by the tradition of the elders, which demons cannot deny, but which is denied by Arians!

"We have heard, to-day, those on whom we laid our hands, saying that none can be saved but he who believes in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit:—that he is dead and only fit for the tomb, who denies the Holy Spirit, and who does not believe the omnipotent virtue of the Trinity. The devil confesses this; but Arians will not confess it. The devil says, May he who denies the deity of the Holy Spirit be tormented, even as he himself is tormented by the martyrs!

"From the devil I receive not testimony but confession. The devil has spoken unwillingly, as put to the question, and wrenched. That which wickedness suppresses, force has extorted. The devil yields to stripes, although Arians know not how to yield so. How much have they endured, and yet, like Pharaoh, they are only hardened by their sufferings! The devil said, as we read in Scripture, 'I know thee, who thou art, the Son of the living God:' the Jews said, 'We know not who he is.' The demons have been saying, to-day and yesterday, 'We know that ye are martyrs:' the Arians say, 'We do not know it; we will not understand it, we will not believe it.' The demons say to the martyrs, 'You are come to destroy us:' the Arians say, 'These are not the true pangs of demons; but scenes contrived and *got up*.' I have heard of many things being contrived; but surely no one could

ever devise this, to feign himself a demon! [demoniac.] How is it that we see those so violently agitated, on whom our hands are laid? What room is there here for deception? What suspicion of dissembling?

"But it is not I that claim as a suffrage for the martyrs, the voice of demons. By the benefits they confer their sacred passion is proved. It has its judges—even those that are cleansed! it has its witnesses—even the liberated! A better voice is uttered by the soundness of those who came sick. A better voice issues from their blood; for blood has a sonorous voice which reaches from earth to heaven. Ye have read of God's saying, 'Thy brother's blood crieth to me:' and here blood cries—by the sign of its colour; blood cries by the proclamation of its effects; blood cries by the triumph of suffering. I have yielded to your request that the enshrining the relics should be deferred from yesterday to to-day." *

This piece of history, although it be a sample of a large class, belonging to the same period, wonderfully resembling each other in their general characteristics, may yet command more attention than many of them seem to deserve; for the principal actor in the drama is one of the most considerable persons of the Nicene era; and one whose behaviour in any instance may fairly be taken as indicative of the qualities of the system within which he moved. Ambrose was at once the creature of that system, and second to few among its supporters. And then the narrative is conveyed to us by Ambrose himself, not by an admiring biographer; and this is done in the most serious and deliberate manner. Moreover the circumstances themselves are all strictly *historical*; nor are they to be explained by any supposition of illusion, or innocent credulity:—if not miraculous, in the fullest sense, they are the product of fraud, in the worst sense. Furthermore, the narrative, as given by Ambrose, and as elucidated by some correlative evidence, which we shall bring forward, supplies the means for instituting a critical scrutiny, whence we can hardly fail to draw a satisfactory conclusion, such

* The latin of so much of this epistle as is of historic quality, will be found at the end of the number.

as will be of extensive application to the persons, principles, usages, and events, of the same times.

But before commenting on this Letter of Ambrose to his sister, we shall lay before the reader some other evidence, bearing upon the transactions in question. Paulinus, the bishop's private secretary, thus narrates the same circumstance, in the 'Life of St. Ambrose,' which he addressed to Augustine.

"About this time the holy martyrs Protasius and Gervasius *revealed themselves* to the bishop (sacerdos.) They lay in the church which now contains the bodies of St. Nabor and St. Felix—martyrs. But while crowds were constantly resorting to the holy martyrs, Nabor and Felix, the very names of the martyrs P. and G. as well as their place of interment, were unknown! Insomuch that their sepulchres were trampled upon by all who would approach the rails which defended the sepulchres of the holy martyrs, Nabor and Felix, from injury. But when the bodies of the holy martyrs (P. and G.) were raised, and placed on litters, the satanic maladies of many were at once removed. As to wit—a blind man named Severus, who at this day devoutly ministers in the Ambrosian church, to which the bodies of the martyrs were translated, as he touched the pall of the martyrs, instantly received sight:—those whose bodies were possessed by unclean spirits were healed, and returned gratefully to their homes. But just in proportion as the faith of the catholic church spread by the means of the cures effected by the martyrs, the false belief (perfidia) of the Arians was depressed."—Vita, p. iv.

Nevertheless, as the biographer assures us, many Arians, about the court, favoured by the empress Justina, did not scruple to scout these miracles and possessions as factitious; and they even affirmed that Ambrose had hired persons to feign themselves demoniacs, and to declare themselves tortured by him and the martyrs!—sed accepta pecunia se torqueri mentirentur.

Having Ambrose's own, and unquestioned account of this much noised transaction before us, as well as that of his private secretary, it will be well to see in what manner it is reported and accepted by a respectable modern Romanist writer; who finds the whole to be in perfect conformity with the doctrines and practices of his church. In truth, as to the direct invocation of saints, the

veneration of relics, and the miraculous dispensation appealed to in support of this worship, *there is absolutely no difference in principle, between the Nicene, and the modern Romish church*;—unless it be this, that the one set an example, which the other has religiously followed. But inasmuch as this identity has frequently been affirmed in these pages, and as moreover it is a circumstance of vital importance in the present controversy, I must request the reader to note the homogeneity of the two documents, namely—the letter of Ambrose, and Alban Butler's report of the same transactions.

Ambrose, we have seen, admits that no memorial whatever of these Milanese martyrs had been preserved:—not so much as their mere names had been reported. It seems however that, on the emergency when, at the demand of the people, relics were by any means to be procured for the new church, these long forgotten worthies appeared in vision to the bishop, and not only informed him of the place of their interment; but left with him some few particulars of their parentage and sufferings.

SS. Gervasius and Protasius, MM.

"St. Ambrose calls these saints the protomartyrs of Milan. They seem to have suffered in the first persecution, under Nero, or at latest under Domitian, and are said to have been the sons of SS. Vitalis and Valeria, both martyrs, the first at Ravenna, the second at Milan. This latter city was the place which SS. Gervasius and Protasius rendered illustrious by their glorious martyrdom and miracles. St. Ambrose assures us, that the divine grace prepared them a long time for their crown, by the good example which they gave, and by the constancy with which they withstood the corruption of the world. He adds, they were beheaded for the faith. They are said to have been twin brothers.

"The faithful at Milan, in the fourth age, had lost the remembrance of these saints. *Yet the martyrs had not ceased to assist that church in its necessities*; and the discovery of their relics rescued it from the utmost danger. The empress Justina, widow of Valentinian I. and mother of Valentinian the Younger, who then reigned, and resided at Milan, was a violent abettor of Arianism,

and used her utmost endeavours to expel St. Ambrose. The Arians did not stick to have recourse to the most horrible villanies and forgeries, to compass that point. In so critical a conjuncture, *our martyrs declared themselves the visible protectors of that distressed church.* St. Austin, both in his twenty-second book—Of the City of God, and in his Confessions, says, that God revealed to St. Ambrose by a vision in a dream, the place where their relics lay. Paulinus, in his Life of St. Ambrose, says, this was done by an apparition of the martyrs themselves. The bishop was going to dedicate a new church, the same which was afterward called the Ambrosian basilic, and now St. Ambrose the Great. The people desired him to do it with the same solemnity as he had already consecrated another church in the quarter near the gate that led to Rome, in honour of the holy apostles, in which he had laid a portion of their relics. He was at a loss to find relics for this second church. The bodies of Saints Gervasius and Protasius lay then unknown before the rails which enclosed the tomb of SS. Nabor and Felix. St. Ambrose caused this place to be dug up, and there found the bodies of two very big men, with their bones entire, and in their natural position, but the heads separated from their bodies, with a large quantity of blood, and all the marks which could be desired to ascertain the relics.

"A possessed person, who was brought to receive the imposition of hands, before he began to be exorcised, was seized, and, in horrible convulsions, thrown down by the evil spirit upon the tomb.* The sacred relics were taken up whole, and laid on litters in their natural situation, covered with ornaments, and conveyed to the basilic of Faustus, now called SS. Vitalis and Agricola, near that of St. Nabor, which at present bears the name of St. Francis. They were exposed here two days, and an incredible concourse of people watched the two nights in prayer. On the third day, which was the eighteenth of June, they were translated into the Ambrosian basilic with the honour due to martyrs, and with the public rejoicings of the whole city. In the way happened the famous cure of a blind man named Severus, a citizen of Milan, well known to the whole town. He had been a butcher, but was obliged by the loss

* Butler must have read the text otherwise than it stands in the Benedictine edition.

of his sight to lay aside his profession. Hearing of the discovery of the relics, he desired to be conducted to the place where they were passing by, and upon touching the fringe of the ornaments with which they were covered, he that instant perfectly recovered his sight, in the presence of an infinite multitude. This miracle is related by St. Ambrose, St. Austin, and Paulinus, who were all three then at Milan. Severus made a vow to be a servant in the church of the saints; that is, the Ambrosian basilic, where their relics lay. St. Austin, when he went from Milan, in 387, left him in that service, and he continued in it when Paulinus wrote the life of St. Ambrose, in 411. Many other lame and sick persons were cured of divers distempers by touching the shrouds which covered the relics, or linen cloths which had been thrown upon them. Devils also, in possessed persons, confessed the glory of the martyrs, and declared they were not able to bear the torments which they suffered in the presence of the bodies of the saints. All this is attested by St. Ambrose in his letter to his sister, in which he has inserted the sermon which he preached in the Ambrosian basilic when the relics arrived there. Two days after, he deposited them in the vault under the altar on the right hand. St. Ambrose adds that the blood found in their tomb was likewise an instrument of many miracles. We find the relics of these saints afterward dispersed in several churches, chiefly this blood, which was gathered and mixed with a paste, as St. Gaudentius says. Also linen cloths dipped in this blood were distributed in many places, as St. Gregory of Tours relates. St. Austin mentions a church in their honour in his diocese of Hippo, where many miracles were wrought, and relates one that was very remarkable. He preached his two hundred and eighty-sixth sermon on their festival in Africa, where we find it marked in the old African Calendar on the nineteenth of June, on which day it was observed over all the West; and with great solemnity at Milan, and in many dioceses and parish churches, of which these martyrs are the titular saints. St. Ambrose observes, that the Arians at Milan, by denying the miracles of these martyrs, shewed that they had a different faith from that of the martyrs; otherwise they would not have been jealous of their miracles; but this faith, as he says, is confirmed by the tradition of our ances-

tors, which the devils are forced to confess, but which the heretics deny."—*Butler*, June 19.

Augustine was at this time at Milan, in the early fervour of his conversion, and where he had recently been baptized by Ambrose. He once and again mentions the finding the bodies of SS. G. and P. but, as appears from some discrepancy between his statements and those of Ambrose, he knew nothing more of the transaction than what the crowd was permitted to know. The short passage in the Confessions relating to this occurrence, I will transcribe, that the reader may be able to estimate its value at the full.

Tunc, (*i. e.* in the year 387) memorato antistiti tuo per visum aperuisti,* quo loco laterent Martyrum corpora Protasii et Gervasii, quæ per tot annos INCORRUPTA (Ambrose calls the relics *ossa*, although they lay soaked in *recent blood*) in thesauro secreti tui recondideras, unde *opportune* promeres ad coercendam rabiem feminam, sed regiam (alluding to the empress Justina.) Cum enim propalata et effossa digno cum honore transferrentur ad Ambrosianam basilicam, non solum quos immundi vexabant spiritus, confessis eisdem dæmonibus sanabantur, verum etiam quidam [Severus] plures annos cæcus, civis, civitatique notissimus, cum populi tumultuantis lætitiæ caussam quæsisset atque audisset, exsilivit, eoque se ut duceret, suum ducem rogavit. Quo perductus impetravit admitti, ut sudario tangeret feretrum pretiosæ in conspectu tuo mortis sanctorum tuorum. Quod ubi fecit, atque admovit oculis, confestim aperti sunt. Inde fama discurrens, inde laudes tuæ ferventes lucentes, inde illius [Justina] inimicæ animus etsi ad credendi sanitatem non ampliatus, a persequendi tamen furore compressus est. Gratias tibi Deus meus! —Confess. ix. 7.

In the De Civitate, Augustine again mentions this same instance, among several adduced to prove the continuance of miracles in the Church. Miracles are still wrought, says he, although not such, or under such circumstances as to command the universal assent even of the faithful, or to equal in authority those recorded in the inspired canon. They are but partially

* The reader need not be told that Augustine addresses his Confessions immediately to God.

known, even in the places where they occur; and—quando alibi aliisque narrantur, non tanta ea commendat auctoritas, ut sine *difficultate vel dubitatione credantur*, quamvis Christianis fidelibus a fidelibus indicentur.

Miraculum quod Mediolani factum est, cum illic essemus, quando illuminatus est cæcus, ad multorum notitiam potuit pervenire, quia et grandis est civitas, et ibi erat tunc Imperator, et immenso populo teste res gesta est, concurrente ad corpora martyrum Protasii et Gervasii: quæ cum laterent, et penitus nescirentur, episcopo Ambrosio per somnium revelata reperta sunt; ubi cæcus ille depulsis veteribus tenebris diem vidit.—De Civ. Dei, xxii. 8.

These same worthies are also the subject of a commemorative sermon, In Natali Martyrum Protasii et Gervasii, from which I cite the only passage that can be considered as containing any *evidence*, bearing upon the subject in hand.

Celebramus ergo hodierno die, Fratres, memoriam in hoc loco positam sanctorum Protasii et Gervasii, Mediolanensium Martyrum. Non eum diem quo hic posita est, sed eum diem hodie celebramus, quando inventa est pretiosa in conspectu Domini mors sanctorum ejus per Ambrosium episcopum, hominem Dei: cujus tunc tantæ gloriæ Martyrum etiam ego testis fui. Ibi eram, Mediolani eram, facta miracula novi, adtestante Deo pretiosis mortibus sanctorum suorum: ut per illa miracula jam non solum in conspectu Domini, sed etiam in conspectu hominum esset mors illa pretiosa. Cæcus notissimus universæ civitati illuminatus est, cucurrit, adduci se fecit, sine duce reversus est. Nondum audivimus quod obierit: forte adhuc vivit. In ipsa eorum basilica, ubi sunt eorum corpora, totam vitam suam serviturum se esse devovit. Nos illum gavisi sumus videntem, reliquimus servientem.—Serm. CCLXXXVI.

The Festival sermons, among which occurs the one now referred to, afford ample and melancholy evidence of the firm hold which this pernicious superstition had, in Augustine's time, obtained of the Church at large; and they moreover show, that those futile pleas and extenuations by means of which it was attempted, either to justify practices so flagrantly unchristian, or to exclude the abuses seen to spring from them, were of no better quality, in

the fourth century, than they have been in later times. Teachers, secretly conscious of the dangerous tendency of this polytheistic worship, and yet not bold or honest enough to denounce it, insinuated some feeble cautions, and made some nice distinctions, which the people barely listened to, which they took no pains to understand, and which in practice they utterly disregarded. As a preparation for the inference we shall presently have to draw from the circumstances of the Ambrosian miracle, a few sentences more from Augustine are appropriate.

Non ergo mirum est, Fratres mei: scitis quo loco Martyres recitentur? Non pro illis orat Ecclesia. Nam merito pro aliis defunctis dormientibus orat Ecclesia: pro Martyribus non orat, sed eorum potius orationibus se commendat. Certaverunt enim adversus peccatum usque ad sanguinem.—Serm. CCLXXXIV.

Martyrum perfecta justitia est, quoniam in ipsa passione perfecti sunt. Ideo pro illis in Ecclesia non oratur. Pro aliis fidelibus defunctis oratur, pro Martyribus non oratur: tam enim perfecti exierunt, ut non sint suscepti nostri, sed advocati. Neque hoc in se, sed in illo cui capiti perfecta membra cohæserunt. Ille est enim vere advocatus unus, qui interpellat pro nobis, sedens ad dexteram Patris: sed advocatus unus, sicut et pastor unus.—Serm. CCLXXXV.

Another passage, containing a casual allusion to the Milanese martyrs, is of the same general quality.

Exspectat Sanctitas Vestra scire quid hodie in isto loco positum sit. Reliquiæ sunt primi et beatissimi Martyris Stephani. Audistis, cum passionis ejus lectio legeretur de libro canonico Actuum Apostolorum, quemadmodum lapidatus sit a Judæis, quemadmodum Domino commendaverit spiritum suum, quemadmodum etiam in extremo genibus fixis oraverit pro lapidatoribus suis. Hujus, corpus ex illo usque ad ista tempora latuit; *nuper autem apparuit,** sicut solent apparere sanctorum corpora Martyrum, revelatione Dei, quando placuit Creatori. Sic ante aliquot annos, nobis juvenibus apud Mediolanum constitutis, apparuerunt corpora sanctorum Martyrum Gervasii et Protasii. Scitis quod

* The invention of the Relics of St. Stephen is a story so highly characteristic of the religion of the times, that I shall if possible make room for it in these pages.

Gervasius et Protasius longe posterius passi sunt, quam beatissimus Stephanus. Quare ergo illorum prius, et hujus postea? Nemo disputet: voluntas Dei fidem quærit, non quæstionem. Verum autem revelatum fuit ei, qui res ipsas inventas monstravit. Præcedentibus enim signis locus demonstratus est; et quomodo fuerat revelatum, sic et inventum est. Multi inde reliquias acceperunt, quia Deus voluit, et huc venerunt. Commendatur ergo Caritati Vestræ et locus et dies: utrumque celebrandum in honorem Dei, quem confessus est Stephanus. Nos enim in isto loco non aram fecimus Stephano, sed de reliquiis Stephani aram Deo. Grata sunt Deo hujusmodi altaria. Quæris quare? Quia pretiosa in conspectu Domini mors sanctorum ejus.—Serm. CCCXVIII.

The 'holy martyrs' SS. G. and P. were abundantly recompensed for the long oblivion under which their fame had suffered, by the wide-spread renown that followed the happy discovery of their remains; for not only was the Ambrosian basilic incessantly frequented by multitudes, seeking their aid and patronage; but by their blood (wrought into a paste) wonders were performed in all parts of Christendom whither it had been sent. Upon his particular friends, Ambrose bestowed some small bone of the martyrs; and it appeared that the virtue of the ossa entire, attached to every separate joint. Among those who had been thus favoured, was Paulinus, the accomplished bishop of Nola. The precious fragment was sumptuously enshrined, along with other 'jewels,' of similar quality, under the altar of his church, as the inscription which he reports, declares.

DE RELIQUIIS.

Ecce sub accensis altaribus ossa piorum
Regia purpureo marmore crusta tegit.
Hîc et Apostolicas præsentat gratia vires
Magnis in parvo pulvere pignoribus.
Hîc pater Andreas, et magno nomine Lucas,
Martyr et illustris sanguine Nazarius;
Quósque suo Deus Ambrosio post longa revelat
Sæcula, Protasium cum pare Gervasio.
Hîc simul una pium complectitur arcula cœtum,
Et capit exiguo nomina tanta sinu.—Epist. XII. ad Severum.

There are those who will be inclined to believe, that, as well the pretensions to miraculous powers, as the gross superstitions

in support of which these wonders were wrought, found listeners and favourers among the ignorant multitude only. This was far from being the fact. The most enlightened men of the times were personally implicated in the miracles, and zealously promoted the therewith-connected superstitions.

These pages will furnish evidence enough to this effect; but having introduced the name of Paulinus, bishop of Nola, I take the occasion to request the learned reader to look into the works of this accomplished and amiable man—himself master of all the learning and intelligence of the age, and in constant communication with the best instructed divines, his contemporaries, several of whom have left on record their high admiration of his genius and piety:—and yet this Paulinus was addicted to the demonolatry of the age in its very grossest forms! The case of Paulinus, along with many of similar import, compels us to believe that this polytheism must have been of earlier origin than the fourth century; for it is difficult to suppose that men such as those who were implicated in it, could, with so much unanimity and earnestness, have lent themselves to *novelties* so flagrantly opposed to the mind and drift of the Scriptures. Abandoning themselves to the most vilifying superstitions, these eminent men were not merely 'given over to the belief of lies,' but unhappily to the deliberate machination of impious frauds.

If this be a bold affirmation, let us scrutinize the evidence in the signal instance of the Ambrosian miracles, connected with the discovery and subsequent worship of the relics of SS. Gervasius and Protasius.

The empress Justina had asked, as a concession to peace, that *one* of the city churches should be surrendered to the use of the Arian clergy for the celebration of the worship which she herself, and the court professed. This demand the high-minded prelate, supported by the mass of the people and the clergy, resisted with a firmness which, had it been conjoined with christian integrity and humility, would have deserved admiration. The contest between the secular and ecclesiastical authorities convulsed the city, and even seemed likely to kindle the flames of civil war throughout Italy. The empress, as pertinacious as she was beautiful, and the bishop, equally resolute and ambitious, both felt their personal honour

pledged in the controversy. Temporal and Spiritual power—the latter being sustained by the brute force of the many, seemed to be evenly balanced. The Church however, and while defying the Court, spoke of herself—and this is not unusual, as enduring a persecution little less severe than those of an earlier (and better) age! Was it not therefore a time when miracles were to be looked for?

At the same moment a new and sumptuous basilic was to be dedicated; and this magnificent structure was to carry down to future times the name and reputation of Ambrose himself.* But a church, in that age of christian purity, was nothing without 'holy relics,' and shrines too, to which the people in all times of their trouble might have recourse. Chrysostom, as we have seen, and Gregory, and all other writers of the same period, show to what extent this worship of the martyrs was then carried; and that these divinities, by effecting the cure of diseases, and by defending cities from the incursions of barbarians, brought no small honour, and probably equal gain, to their ministers. SS. Nabor and Felix were then the mighty lords protectors of Milan, watching over its welfare, spiritual as well as temporal; and meriting the homage so cheerfully paid them by the grateful people, who, as we are assured, 'continued to venerate their relics with the same ardour of devotion:' and no wonder, for these same potent 'benefactors,' as Ambrose himself informs us, and as we learn from other sources, shed their favours over all the wide world. Granum sinapis martyres nostri sunt Felix, Nabor et Victor: habebant odorem fidei, sed latebat. Venit persecutio, arma posuerunt, colla flexerunt, contriti gladio per totius terminos mundi gratiam sui sparsere martyrii, ut jure dicatur: 'In omnem terram exivit sonus eorum.'—In Luc. vii. 13.

The Ambrosian basilic was therefore to be placed on an even footing with the basilic of SS. Nabor and Felix. But Milan had not been fertile in martyrs—its soil was poor in holy dust:—to import these needed treasures, according to a frequent practice of the times, seemed to imply a disparagement of so christian a city.—At the very moment while the Church is pressed upon by her enemies, and the reasonable fervour of the people demands

* SS. Vitalis and Agricola have dislodged St. Ambrose.

its pabulum—*in that very night*, the hitherto unheard-of martyrs G. and P. rush from the skies—enter the episcopal palace, make themselves known to the bishop, furnish him with the necessary particulars of their names, sufferings, and place of interment! Thus, not unexpectedly as he tells us—statimque subiit velut cujusdam ardor præsagii—aided in his season of perplexity, he presents himself before the people and clergy, with the bright animation of assured hope on his countenance!

Now, then let us look to the prelate's *own account* of what followed: and for the greater distinctness we shall conduct our analysis under several heads; and shall first inquire concerning—

THE PLACE OF EXHUMATION. This is a material circumstance. It is expressly acknowledged that these martyrs had suffered in some one of the *earliest* persecutions—the first, or the second; and that all memory of their names and sufferings had been lost; consequently it was before the date of christian churches. It will be thought perhaps that the church had been built designedly on the spot where these martyrs had been interred by their christian friends;—but if so, their names and martyrologies would doubtless have been preserved by tradition. Nothing of the sort was pretended. Here then to begin with, is the coincidence that, precisely within the rails of the shrine of SS. Nabor and Felix, these martyr-remains should lie. Inasmuch however as the ancient christian churches were frequently erected over, or near, cemeteries, we may grant the probability that the remains of the dead might be found beneath the pavement: and it is also not improbable that, to Ambrose or to his clergy, the fact of the existence of such sepulchral remains beneath this church was known. Be this as it may, the interior of a church was a place where, with perfect safety, and during the night, those preparations might be made which the occasion demanded. We next notice what Ambrose says of—

THE DIFFIDENCE OF THE CLERGY, when informed of the bishop's intention to break up the pavement:—formidantibus enim clericis. —This, conjoined with his own—cujusdam ardor presagii, precludes the supposition that he was acting only as prompted or directed at the moment by his clergy, who, it might be imagined,

had made the requisite preparations without his knowledge. If their fears for the result were genuine, then it was *he*, not *they* who were in the secret: but if affected, then, unless he had been privy to these preparations, their seeming reluctance or trepidation would not have consisted with the part they must have acted in bringing him forward at the moment as their guileless tool. Whatever opinion we may feel ourselves compelled to adopt as to the quality of these transactions, Ambrose himself must be regarded as the principal mover in them. We might notice the manifest factitiousness of the names attributed to these martyrs; but we turn to what is less ambiguous—

THE AGREEING INDICATIONS. The earth having been removed from before the rails of the shrine of SS. Felix and Nabor, everything indicated that the search would not be fruitless. Some persons (whether sick or possessed is not said) being led forward, upon whom the bishop was to lay his hands, the holy martyrs—that is—the ossa, so began to bestir themselves that, by the commotion, an urn was thrown with violence from its pedestal, and rolled to the spot of the interment!* If all be genuine in this transaction—if the 'Invention of the Relics' was indeed the work of God, then this upheaving of the bones at the moment when these persons approached, is what may be believed;—but if not, then let the circumstance be noted as one of those which concur to prove a carefully prepared fraud, in the execution of which the several agents must have been well instructed, as to the parts they were to perform:—and these instructions must have been given during the very night in which Ambrose solemnly professed that he had received a visit from the glorified martyrs! We next come to—

THE HOLY RELICS. Invenimus miræ magnitudinis viros duos—ut prisca ætas ferebat—ossa omnia integra—sanguinis plurimum! Four particulars, and each well worthy of attention!

Augustine seems to have understood that the bodies were entire; only that the heads were severed. But we adhere to Ambrose's own account, who doubtless knew more of the affair than the young Augustine could have known. Two gigantic skeletons, and every bone in its place, notwithstanding the

* See Butler's version of this incident.

convulsive effort they had just before made, which had heaved or shaken the earth around the spot! But we may imagine that where there was *fresh blood*, there might also be tough sinews; yet the question occurs whether the martyrs had bestirred themselves after so strange a fashion, with, or without their heads? which would be the greater miracle it is hard to say.

But they were giants, the phrase—ut prisca ætas ferebat, is designedly ambiguous; yet, in whatever way it be rendered, the meaning must be that, inasmuch as these martyrs had lived and suffered in an unknown remote antiquity, it was very natural that they should be of gigantic size; for who has not heard of the Anakim and other Herculean worthies? These martyrs then, had they witnessed to the truth of Christianity in the days of the Pharaohs, or of the earliest Assyrian tyrants?—Not so, for they were believed to have suffered under Nero or Domitian!

What then is the meaning of this expression? Did Ambrose make this reference to the—prisca ætas, as a reason for the 'wonderful bigness' of the skeletons of martyrs who had suffered in the time of Nero? *He* knew well enough that the human race was not of loftier stature in the second century, than in the fourth. But the people, grossly ignorant and fanatical, craved the marvellous, and their bishop scrupled not to furnish it. A principal circumstance however is the—

PLENTY OF BLOOD. This surprising and decisive fact is not merely incidentally referred to by Ambrose in the passing phrase —Sanguinis plurimum; but, toward the close of the second address to the people, it is very distinctly, and with an awful solemnity of language, insisted upon, and formally appealed to, as an irrefragable proof of the reality of the train of miracles therewith connected. Moreover this *fresh liquid blood*, with which the earth all around was soaked, and in the midst of which *the bare skeletons weltered*—sanguine tumulus madet, apparent cruoris triumphalis notæ, having been collected was worked up into a paste, and sent through the length and breadth of Christendom as a panacea!

In all times, from the fourth century to the present day, fresh, bright, liquid, martyr blood has, among 'well instructed'

catholic people, been held in the highest esteem, and has been eagerly coveted as a supernatural agent. Dry bones may be good; —but bones and blood, are much better! Why there should not have been *flesh* where both the more solid and the more fluid elements of the bodies were miraculously preserved, does not appear—and it is a question more curious than edifying. This however is certain, that it is much easier to drench dry bones in real blood, than to clothe them with real flesh. But these holy martyrs had suffered decapitation in a remote age—they had been, as must be supposed, removed from the place of execution by their christian friends, and decently interred side by side; and there—some hours after their decapitation and interment, the blood had began to flow from the headless trunks! and it had continued moistening the earth all around, and it had remained unchanged during two hundred years, and while the fleshy parts had undergone ordinary decomposition, and had wholly disappeared! Such was the series of miracles involved in Ambrose's statement of the facts! But perhaps it may not be intended that a perpetual miracle had conserved the martyrs' blood so long: —it had suddenly been created at the moment of the 'invention!'—As the feet of the bishop approached the holy spot a gush of warm and crimson gore shed a vital torrent around the sacred remains! This then is what the faithful are to believe!

It is a catholic opinion that martyr blood has the property of liquefying annually, of which very many instances are on record—and this perhaps was one. Yet if for a moment a cold scepticism might be listened to, we should ask—whence indeed had come this blood, which, as Ambrose solemnly affirms, moistened the earth where these bones were found? We have here before us a circumstance very distinct in its kind, and in which there could be no *illusion*. This blood was either miraculously produced (and what a miracle, if so—and for what a purpose!) or, if not, it had been brought from the shambles by the order of whoever was at the bottom of the scheme; and it had been poured upon these ossements, which were afterward covered with earth! The shrewd reader will not have failed to notice the circumstance, that the man (Severus) who was miraculously restored to sight on this occasion, is stated to have been

by trade *a butcher;* and although he had been compelled to relinquish his profession, it does not necessarily follow that he had renounced all his professional connexions: it may be imagined that some of his kin were still in the trade, and therefore in condition to supply 'to order' the sanguinis plurimum. This same butcher, as Augustine affirms, was provided for in the Ambrosian church, within the precincts of which he passed the residue of his days—out of the reach of heretical Arians, or other sceptics.

The people, it is said, had asked that the translation of the holy relics should be deferred till the next Sunday. Why so religious a request could not be complied with, does not appear. Might we surmise that a motive of discretion would induce the bishop to consign the bones, and the blood, and all, to the place of their rest as early as possible; and before indications of the corruptibility of the cruor triumphalis should offend the senses, even of the devout? Those whose duty it was to prepare the purple-paste—rare confection! would know how, as 'cunning apothecaries,' to obviate any inconvenience of this sort, while yet imbuing the mass with a sufficient proportion of the 'genuine martyr blood' to secure the transmission of its healing properties.

And now let the reader say whether he finds it possible to believe that this blood, soaking the earth in which these skeletons were found, was indeed the blood that had belonged to the living men. Very few would acknowledge so ample a stretch of faith as this. But if there be any such persons, they should consider to what, and to how much they implicitly pledge themselves in professing to believe *this* miracle. The blood miracles of this, and the following centuries, are countless; and many of them are as well, or better attested than is this one. The modern Romish church has blood to show which has retained its fluidity and colour several hundred years, and is fully as efficacious in healing diseases as was that of SS. G. and P.

Paulinus—the private secretary of Ambrose, assures us that he had seen, in the sepulchre of the holy martyr Nazarius (who suffered nobody knows when) the blood of the martyr *as recent as if it had been shed that very day;* and his head, which had been severed by the wicked, still whole and undecayed, with the hair

and beard, just as when laid at first in the grave!—and the whole emitting the sweetest odours!

And how copious is the evidence which attests the fact that the blood of St. Januarius, bubbling up at the contact of the saint's head (very naturally) has, on several memorable occasions, extinguished the fire of Vesuvius, and turned aside a deluge of lava!

The real point of our argument, as it affects the credit of Ambrose, and of the Nicene church, is well illustrated in the instance of this Neapolitan Tutelar. We subjoin Butler's account of the facts. These miracles are of one and the same texture; they have one and the same tendency; and they possess, in common, an argumentative meaning which should either carry us back as penitents to Rome, or lead us to denounce and disown the corrupt polytheistic church which Rome has followed.

"The city of Naples was so happy as to get possession of the relics of St. Januarius. . . . . The protection of the city of Naples from this dreadful volcano (Vesuvius) by the same means (the saint's intercession) was most remarkable in the year 1631 and 1707. In this last, whilst cardinal Francis Pignatelli, with the clergy and people, devoutly followed the shrine of St. Januarius in procession to a chapel at the foot of mount Vesuvius, the fiery eruption ceased, the mist, which before was so thick that no one could see another at the distance of three yards, was scattered, and at night the stars appeared in the sky.

"The standing miracle, as it is called by Baronius, of the blood of St. Januarius, liquefying and boiling up at the approach of the martyr's head, is likewise very famous. In a rich chapel called the treasury, in the great church at Naples, are preserved the blood in two very old glass vials, and the head of St. Januarius. The blood is congealed, and of a dark colour; but when brought in sight of the head, though at a considerable distance, it melts, bubbles up, and, upon the least motion, flows on any side. The fact is attested by Baronius, Ribadeneira, and innumerable other eye-witnesses of all nations and religions, many of whom most attentively examined all the circumstances. Certain Jesuits sent by F. Bollandus to Naples were allowed by the archbishop, cardinal Philamurini, to see this prodigy; the minute description

of the manner in which it is performed, is related by them in the life of F. Bollandus. It happens equally in all seasons of the year, and in variety of circumstances. The usual times when it is performed, are the feast of St. Januarius, the nineteenth of September; that of the translation of his relics (when they were brought from Puzzuoli to Naples) the Sunday which falls next to the calends of May; and the twentieth day of December, on which in 1631, a terrible eruption of Mount Vesuvius was extinguished, upon invoking the patronage of this martyr. The same is done on extraordinary occasions at the discretion of the archbishop. This miraculous solution and ebullition of the blood of St. Januarius, is mentioned by pope Pius II. when he speaks of the reign of Alphonsus I. of Arragon, king of Naples in 1450. Angelus Cato, an eminent physician of Salerno, and others, mention it in the same century. Almost two hundred years before that epoch, historians take notice that king Charles I. of Anjou coming to Naples, the archbishop brought out the head and blood of this martyr. The continuator of the Chronicle of Maraldus says the same was done upon the arrival of king Roger, who venerated these relics in 1140. Falco of Benevento relates the same thing. From several circumstances this miracle is traced much higher, and it is said to have regularly happened on the annual feast of St. Januarius, and on that of the translation of his relics, from the time of that translation about the year 400."—*Butler*, September 19.

An obvious distinction, very important to our estimate of the morality of those concerned, is here to be noticed.—To attribute the sudden cessation of an eruption of Vesuvius to the intervention of St. Januarius, may indicate nothing worse than the pitiable superstition of the saint's votaries. But the liquefying and bubbling up of the blood in the bottle, at the moment when it is brought near the saint's head, this—if it be not a real miracle, is an abominable trick, and therefore utterly disgraceful to those who manage it, as well as to all who are privy to the fraud. Now it is on the ground of this reasonable distinction that we insist upon the circumstance of the blood, in the Ambrosian miracle. This blood was either that which had flowed in the veins of the men to whom the skeletons had belonged; and if so, it had been preserved by miracle; or, if not so, it had been procured from

a slaughter house, or it had been concocted, and had been poured upon the spot by the order of the principals in this 'invention.' This blood then is a *decisive* circumstance in the entire narrative. If genuine, it carries all the accessories;—and not only so, but it establishes saint-worship, and condemns, as a flagrant impiety, the rejection of this worship by the protestant churches. But if otherwise, then the whole is a congeries of blasphemous knavery —a 'lying wonder.' And then, as we think of the blood, so must we think of—

THE ORTHODOX DEMONIACS. It was a common thing, in these times, when the Church was hardly pressed by heretics, to appeal, either to the devil, or to the dead, in attestation of catholic truth; and always with good effect. I subjoin a very curious and characteristic instance, in which a pagan of the times of the Pharaohs, and who had passed two thousand years, or more, in the mummy state, when invoked by a perplexed disputant, put the Arian to shame!* Milan was distracted by the violence of the two factions —the Orthodox and the Arian—the one headed by the bishop, the other by the empress; but the authority of the latter did not extend to the nether world.—The former, with the good aid of the newly discovered martyrs, could wrench Athanasian doctrine even from reluctant demons!

Here again is a distinct historical incident.—

—If the whole transaction be genuine—blood and all, then these were real demoniacs; and they, being tortured by the holy relics, gave their testimony against Arianism. But if not—then we must not suppose them to have been *real lunatics*; for such could not have been schooled to act their part on this occasion. They must therefore have been wretches—hired to feign themselves possessed, and deliberately instructed as to what they were to utter! Nothing can be imagined more frightfully irreligious than the scene which must have had place in the night preceding the performance of this farce. The men are found who, for a stipulated amount, are willing to act the devil!—They are then told how to behave themselves;—they rehearse their yells;—their performance is criticised, and is at length approved.—They are told

* See Supplement.

in what terms to scream trinitarian doctrine, and how to protest that there is no salvation for Arians!

One shudders to follow a transaction of this sort in its details: and yet it is impossible to escape from the necessity, either of admitting the whole of the alleged miracles, and with them saint-worship, in the grossest form; or of attributing to the actors in it a complicated wickedness of the most odious kind. A few words may dismiss the case of—

THE BLIND BUTCHER. Again we say—If the whole be true and real, this cure is so:—if not, it takes its place along with thousands of similar instances, confidently appealed to by the church of Rome, and solemnly attested, and far better sustained than is this. We have already adverted to a material circumstance in this case, namely, that the restored Severus was, from the moment of his alleged cure, taken under the wing of the Church; and that he passed the residue of his days out of the reach of the incredulous. So Augustine informs us.

It is observable that although Ambrose affirms *many* to have been miraculously healed by the mere contact of the fringe of the pall covering the relics, yet he mentions *no one instance*, except that of the butcher Severus; and to this solitary instance he refers, again and again, as the main prop of his argument.

From among the *multos*, and the *plurimos*, it would surely have been well to select, at the least, two or three unexceptionable instances of cure. The Arians loudly declared their contempt of the entire performance: non sunt, said they, dæmonum vera tormenta, SED FICTA ET COMPOSITA LUDIBRIA. Why not then bring forward five, ten, twenty, of the crowd, who had been released from their maladies, ubi vestem sanctorum manibus contigerunt! We have only now to observe—

THE FLAGRANT POLYTHEISM in recommendation of which these alleged miracles were wrought, and which they actually promoted. Let it be especially noted, that, while the great Thaumaturgues of the fourth century on every occasion aped the Elijah or the Elisha (of which the life of Ambrose by Paulinus, and that of St. Martin of Tours by Sulp. Severus, afford several striking instances) a point of contrast, not observed by them, at once presents itself, namely—that the miracles of the Old Testament were

uniformly wrought in attestation of the first Truth of Theology, and in refutation of polytheism; while those of the nicene church were as uniformly employed for the opposite purpose of sustaining the credit of demonolatry! Let us hear Ambrose himself on this point, and consider, at the same time, what practical interpretation was put upon his language by his hearers—high and low.

Already the people of Milan, according to the usage of the times, were accustomed to frequent the shrines of St. Felix and St. Nabor; humbly supplicating from these demi-gods, aid in trouble and sickness. Ambrose now tells them that henceforward they may resort to the 'new church' for the same purposes—Gaudent omnes extremâ linea contingere, et qui contigerit, salvus erit. We have heard Chrysostom telling the people of Constantinople that Holy Relics are more to be trusted to for the defence of cities, than are walls and towers. Ambrose, in the same strain, speaks of the Church as succoured and defended in the very same manner; and he boldly professes his own confidence in this species of guardianship. The language he employs must not be regarded as a mere flourish of rhetoric; for those to whom he spoke understood him in the literal sense of his words, and he knew they did so, and he and they acted habitually on this professed belief. These martyrs (or their bones) are his guards and defenders.—Tales ego ambio defensores, tales milites habeo. The Lord had opened the eyes of his people (as those of the prophet's servant) to behold the helpers who had often, in times past, succoured them, even when they knew it not—patronos habebamus, et nesciebamus. To heighten the awe of the people in approaching the 'Inviolable Relics,' they are affirmed to possess the formidable power—a power constantly exerted, of inflicting horrible pangs upon evil spirits;—et nunc audistis clamantes dæmones et confitentes martyribus quod pœnas ferre non possint. The devil, wrung with anguish when dragged toward the holy relics, is constrained to make an orthodox confession, and to warn the heretic of what he may look for!

This varied ascription to the martyrs, of powers to help, powers to heal, powers to punish, was enough. Whatever oblique references might be made to the power of God, as the ultimate source of these energies, the people—the ignorant and the instructed alike,

crowded around the visible and palpable shrine, where, as they were taught, the supernatural energy resided. And before this shrine they knelt;—to the deity there present they offered their supplications, and to him, when their suit was granted, they offered their grateful acknowledgments—presenting to the god some appropriate votive offering.

In nothing but names and titles did this worship differ from the abolished paganism;—in nothing did it differ from the idolatry of modern popery. And yet it was in support and recommendation of these abominations that the miracles of the times of Ambrose were wrought! Is it possible, with the Old Testament in our hands, to yield our assent to these 'wonders?'—But if not, they were not *illusions*, but deliberate knaveries, and such precisely as are the tricks of romish priests, in exhibiting a Madonna that moves her eyes and smiles, or a bottle of boiling blood.

Ambrose occupies a high position among the Fathers; and there was a vigour and dignity in his character, as well as a vivid intelligence, which must command respect; but in proportion as we assign praise to the man, individually, we condemn the system which could so far vitiate a noble mind, and impel one so lofty in temper to act a part which heathen philosophers would utterly have abhorred.

Heavy blame has fallen upon the assertion that Romanism is in many respects a reform upon Ancient, or let us say, Nicene Christianity. I will take this occasion to illustrate my meaning in a single instance.—In the Romish communion the working of wonders, although it is not condemned by intelligent and respectable men, is left almost entirely in the hands of very inferior persons, whether they be fanatics or jugglers; and when these things are referred to, it is in a style of evasion, extenuation, explanation, and with an evident wish to save truth and piety, if by any means it may be done, without compromising the avowed principles and practices of the church. And so it is with the direct worship of the saints.—The least possible is said of it; and its enormities are kept out of sight.

But in the Nicene church, so lax were the notions of common morality, and in so feeble a manner did the fear of God influence

the conduct of leading men, that, on occasions when the Church was to be served, and her assailants to be confounded, they did hot scruple to take upon themselves the contrivance and execution of the most degrading impostures. Under the Nicene system, bishops in the great cities could stand up in crowded churches, without shame, and with uplifted hands appeal to Almighty God in attestation of that, as a miracle, which themselves had brought about by trickery, bribes, and secret instructions. No such enormities would be perpetrated by any modern Romish bishop of repute.

Ambrose, before entering upon the service of the Church, had mingled in the busy world, and he knew mankind. Snatched, by the popular whim, from secular affairs in middle life—an unbaptized laic; he was suddenly lifted to the pinnacle of spiritual power. As to Christianity, he had every thing to learn at the moment when the burdensome duties of the episcopate, in a large city, came upon him. He could do nothing but accept the system, entire, into the midst of which he was thrown; and if he be judged by the principles which he found already admitted and acted upon in the Church, he must be regarded with admiration. But then these principles barely retained a rudiment of the pure morality of the New Testament. A worship grossly polytheistic had (as such a worship uniformly does) thoroughly vitiated the moral sense of the professedly christian world, and in combination with the extravagances of the ascetic discipline, had created a taste for whatever is most absurd and most vile in superstition. To glut the prurient appetite of the licentious rabble of the great cities had become the aim of those who aspired to spiritual power; and it was in thus feeding the mob with wonders that the chiefs of the Church obtained an influence which enabled them to cope with the secular power, and often to triumph over it. It was moreover greatly by such means that the influence of the bishops of the principal cities was extended over wide tracts of surrounding country. I shall adduce an instance illustrating this sort of policy, and serving at the same time to show how peculiar a hold 'blood miracles' had obtained over the popular mind. The dry ossa needed the PLURIMUM SANGUINIS to give them life.

The instance now to come before us, belongs to a rather later time than that of the Ambrosian miracle; nevertheless it falls far

within the period over which the pall of catholicity has been spread. Let the reader say whether it be not a proper continuation of the practices of an earlier age, as well as a link connecting the superstitions and fabrications of Romanism, with those of catholic antiquity.

THE BLEEDING RELICS OF ST. EUPHEMIA.

The council of Chalcedon was held in the year 451; but the circumstances narrated by Evagrius are spoken of by him as belonging to a course of years preceding, and must be supposed to date back as far, at least, as to the close of the episcopate of Chrysostom; and we shall see in what way the worship of St. Euphemia connects itself with the opinions and practices approved and taught by that Father, on the other side the Bosphorus. In truth the two cities, Chalcedon and Constantinople, were so much connected in ecclesiastical matters, and the people of both were so much accustomed to mingle in church festivals, that whatever is characteristic of the religious usages of the one, is so of the other. The historian distinctly affirms that the clergy and people of the European shores were wont to participate in the solemnities which he describes; and indeed the patriarch took the lead in them.

"A quarter of a mile from the Thracian Bosphorus," says Gibbon, (chap. 47) "the church of St. Euphemia was built on the summit of a gentle, though lofty ascent: the triple structure was celebrated as a prodigy of art, and the boundless prospect of the land and sea might have raised the mind of a sectary to the contemplation of the God of the universe."

Alas! the worship to which this temple was dedicated tended to fix the thoughts of the people, not upon the God of the universe, but upon a female divinity! Of what avail are the visible demonstrations of the Divine power and goodness, as displayed in the creation, when, in the fanes they frequent, men are taught to address their petitions to the creature, not to the Creator? Feeble must be the influence of the great truths of theology, when the imagination of the people is occupied with 'signs and wonders,' attesting the present power of the demi-god at whose

shrine they kneel! But are we using language which the facts, in this instance, do not warrant?—Let it be seen.

The Fathers of the council of Chalcedon, says the historian Evagrius (a respectable writer) assembled in the magnificent basilic of St. Euphemia, from which a delicious prospect, of verdant slopes, waving corn fields, and clustered trees, lay outstretched before the delighted spectator; and which was bounded on either hand by woody mountains, and in front, by the wide waters of the Propontine sea; and on one side, by the glittering palaces of the imperial city. The shores presented sheltered inlets and levels, richly strewed with shells, and decked with marine plants. The temple itself, graced with domes and marble columns, included a magnificent chapel, the decorations of which were of the most sumptuous kind, and which contained the shrine and relics of the saint, 'accessible,' says the historian, 'to those who wished *to supplicate the martyr*, and to take part in the celebration of the mysteries.' Ὡς ἀνακάντευθεν ἐξῆ τοῖς βουλομένοις ἱκετεύειν τε τὴν μάρτυρα, καὶ τοῖς τελουμένοις παρεῖναι. Beneath the dome of this chapel, and toward the east, the sacred relics of the martyr (St. Euphemia) deposited in an oblong silver coffin, graced a richly decorated enclosure (properly the *shrine*) the coffin itself being curiously sculptured.

But the miracles which from time to time are there wrought by the most holy (St. Euphemia) are known to all christian people, says Evagrius. For not seldom she appears in a dream, either to the bishop for the time being, or to some other person among those eminent for piety, who frequent her fane, and when she enjoins a festival to be held (in her honour). This is forthwith signified to the imperial persons, to the patriarch, and to the people at large; and instantly all repair to the temple—rulers, priests, and the multitude;—one and all desirous of sharing in the solemnities of the occasion. Then, in the sight of all, the primate of Constantinople, attended by his clergy, enters the sacred enclosure within which is deposited the most Holy Body—παράγιον σῶμα. Now on the left side of the silver coffin there is some lattice work closed (ordinarily) by little fittings. Through these an iron rod (or spatula) to the end of which a sponge has been attached, is thrust, even till it touches the most holy relics;

and after working it about awhile, they withdraw it—FULL OF BLOOD, and covered with clots! which, when all the people behold, they worship God, rejoicing. Such is the quantity of blood so extracted, that, as well the pious royal persons, and the clergy there assembled, and the whole multitude of the people brought together on the occasion, receive largely of what is given out in this manner. Nor merely so, for they are accustomed to send some of it to the faithful who wish for it, in all parts of the world. Moreover the clots of this most sacred gore remain uncorrupt and unchanged in appearance, any length of time. This sacred miracle does not however occur at stated or regular periods; but in conformity with the piety and sanctity of the prelate at the time; and it is commonly affirmed that during the episcopate of one eminently adorned by virtues and graces, this marvel is of frequent occurrence. On the contrary, during the presidency of men of an opposite character, these divine manifestations are very rare.

And now, continues the historian, I will mention a miracle which is neither confined to particular seasons, nor has relation to the faith and piety, or the contrary, of any; but presents itself to all without distinction. Whenever any one enters the chamber where the precious coffin containing the most holy relics is placed, he perceives a delicious odour, surpassing any perfume known among men. For neither may the sweet scents of flowery meads, nor perfumes prepared from aromatic substances, be likened to it. —It is altogether peculiar, and incomparable, and is indicative of the energy of that which produces it.*

The facts here related are altogether of the kind to which we confine ourselves in the present argument.—Here was a miracle (if a miracle) frequently recurrent through a long course of years. It was performed under the immediate superintendence, and with the direct concurrence of the church authorities; and it received their deliberate and solemn sanction. It was transacted in the presence of the secular authorities, as well as of a vast concourse of the people; and it was of a kind which excludes every supposition of mere illusion, or of the undefined powers of the imagination, when highly excited. It was either a miracle, or it was a coolly executed fraud—a fraud, moreover, in which

* Evagrius, II. 3. See Supplement.

the bishop (or some eminent person) was the prime mover; for it was to such always, that the goddess was used to reveal herself, and to make known her pleasure. Nor should we overlook the circumstance, insisted upon by the historian, that the sanguinary tide flowed frequent in proportion to the piety (such piety as was that of this age of wonders) of the ruler of the church. In a word —The miracle was as the piety of the age, and the piety of the age was—as its miracles!

In each of the instances now adduced I wish its precise bearing upon our argument to be fully understood. Let us then consider the case of St. Euphemia with this view.—

The gallon, or more, of crimson fluid which, at certain times, was found in the coffin of the saint, was either real blood, miraculously produced; or it was a composition that had been introduced by the priests of the goddess for the purpose of deluding the people, and of promoting the superstition whence their gains accrued. The first supposition we leave to those who will openly profess that they can adopt it—and who, at the same time, stand pledged to the twenty-second of the thirty-nine articles!

But we confidently assume the second supposition—That this miracle was of the same quality with many of which the church of Rome, 'glorying in its shame,' makes its boast. In that case the question presents itself—Did the dignitaries and clergy of Constantinople, when summoned to take their part in these solemnities, cross the Bosphorus in the simplicity of faith; or were they—or the chief of them, conscious of the trickery about to be practised, and therefore guilty participants of the impious farce? It is not easy to give them the benefit of supposing them to be so ignorant—themselves concerned, as they were, in similar practices at home.

Yet for a moment let it be granted that the fraud, hatched among the clergy of Chalcedon, was never suspected by their brethren of Constantinople. Let us imagine them, or some of them, to have been honest men, of devout disposition. — Let us further suppose certain of these pious clergy — themselves acquainted with the Scriptures, and witnessing as they did the idolatrous tendency—and more than tendency, of these superstitions, and seeing to what an extent the people carried their

devotion toward the church divinities, had began to call in question the entire system; and even to doubt the reality of the miracles by which it was sustained. These early *protestants* then, we suppose, propound their scruples to their superiors and brethren, and they declare their apprehension that, how gainful soever might be the 'worshipping of saints, and veneration of relics,' it was in truth a 'fond thing,' destitute of 'warranty of Scripture;'—nay, 'contrary thereto.'

In what manner, do we suppose, would these remonstrants among the Constantinopolitan clergy have been silenced by their superiors? In no other manner, probably, than by spreading before them the pages of St. John Chrysostom, who, in all the copiousness of a fervent eloquence, recommends this very worship, and chides the too languid zeal of the populace in this behalf! Whatever might be surmised concerning the manufacture of the blood of St. Euphemia, there could be no room to question the lawfulness, nay the merit of the devotion rendered to her relics, by any but those who would dare to impugn the authority of the catholic world, as expressed by the late renowned head of the Constantinopolitan church. Let us hear his very words, and suppose them to have been read aloud to the multitude assembled on one of these occasions in the basilic of St. Euphemia. In this particular connexion let every word of the following passage be gravely considered, and the question be conscientiously answered, whether the Fathers of the fourth century must not be held responsible, as the authors of the idolatries, delusions, and frauds of the next age.

Τάχα πολὺς ὑμῖν ἐγένετο πόθος τῶν ἁγίων ἐκείνων· μετὰ τούτου τοίνυν τοῦ πυρὸς προσπέσωμεν αὐτῶν τοῖς λειψάνοις· συμπλακῶμεν αὐτῶν ταῖς θήκαις· δύνανται γὰρ καὶ θῆκαι μαρτύρων πολλὴν ἔχειν δύναμιν, ὥσπερ οὖν καὶ τὰ ὀστᾶ τῶν μαρτύρων πολλὴν ἔχει τὴν ἰσχύν. Καὶ μὴ μόνον ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς ἑορτῆς ταύτης, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν ἑτέραις ἡμέραις προσεδρεύωμεν αὐταῖς, παρακαλῶμεν αὐτὰς, ἀξιῶμεν γενέσθαι προστάτιδας ἡμῶν· πολλὴν γὰρ ἔχουσι παῤῥησίαν οὐχὶ ζῶσαι μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τελευτήσασαι· καὶ πολλῷ μᾶλλον τελευτήσασαι. Νῦν γὰρ τὰ στίγματα φέρουσι τοῦ Χριστοῦ· τὰ δὲ στίγματα ἐπιδεικνύμεναι ταῦτα, πάντα δύνανται πεῖσαι τὸν βασιλέα. Ἐπεὶ οὖν τοσαύτη ἡ δύναμις αὐταῖς καὶ ἡ φιλία πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν, τῇ συνεχεῖ

προσεδρίᾳ καὶ τῇ διηνεκεῖ πρὸς αὐτὰς ἀφίξει καταστήσαντες ἑαυτοὺς οἰκείους αὐτῶν, ἐπισπασώμεθα δι' αὐτῶν τὴν παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ φιλανθρωπίαν· ἧς γένοιτο πάντας ἡμᾶς ἐπιτυχεῖν, χάριτι καὶ φιλανθρωπίᾳ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, μεθ' οὗ τῷ Πατρὶ ἡ δόξα, ἅμα τῷ ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ, καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Ἀμήν. *Chrysostom*, II. 770.

I have already had occasion to cite this passage* along with several others equally decisive, and which not merely afford the most ample warrant for the worship of St. Euphemia; but, by implication, vouch for the reality of the miracles wrought to keep it in credit. If it was the duty of christian people, as Chrysostom tells us it was, to pay assiduous court to the martyrs, at their shrines; and to seek directly from them—or from their intercession, benefits, ordinary and extraordinary — or supernatural; then it is not to be doubted that the flow of blood, and the cures thence resulting, were genuine favours, granted by the propitiated divinity to her votaries.

But if regard is to be paid to the plainest principles of historical reasoning, then is it certain, first—

That St. Euphemia's blood was an execrable fraud; and secondly—

That this polytheistic worship, and the cheats connected with it, are to be traced directly to the doctrine taught, and the practices encouraged, by Chrysostom, and his contemporary hierarchs.

THE INVENTION OF THE CROSS, AND THE MIRACLES THEREWITH CONNECTED.

Few circumstances of the times now in question attracted more attention, or were more frequently and emphatically alluded to by contemporary writers, than the finding, at Jerusalem, the very cross on which our Lord had suffered, and with it—those of the two thieves, as well as the Roman spear—the nails—the thorny crown—the inscription—the sponge, and some of the blood shed for the remission of sins! This signal event, moreover, carries us up to a time a few months later only than the council of Nice,

* Vol. II. p. 193.

and a century earlier than the period which is claimed as belonging to the authoritative era of catholic Christianity.

The entire evidence bearing upon this point of church history, well deserves a perusal. And in order that the scattered materials now to be adduced may be understood in their connexion, I shall premise a digest of the whole, in the language of the learned and careful compiler to whose pages I have so often had occasion to refer. Moreover a comparison of Butler's narrative with the original evidence, will show in what manner modern Romanist writers are accustomed to smooth the less agreeable features of antiquity.

"St. Helena, the emperor's (Constantine's) mother, out of a desire of visiting the holy places there, undertook a journey into Palestine in 326;* though at that time near eighty years of age; and on her arrival at Jerusalem, was inspired with a great desire to find the identical cross on which Christ had suffered for our sins. But there was no mark or tradition, even amongst the Christians, where it lay. The heathens out of an aversion to Christianity, had done what they could to conceal the place where our Saviour was buried. They had heaped upon it a great quantity of stones and rubbish, besides building a temple to Venus; that those who came thither to adore him, might seem to pay their worship to a marble idol representing this false deity. They had moreover erected a statue of Jupiter in the place where our Saviour rose from the dead, as we are informed by St. Jerome; which figure continued there from the emperor Adrian's time to Constantine's: which precautions of the persecutors show the veneration which Christians paid from the beginning to the instruments of our Redemption. Helena, being willing to spare no pains to compass her pious design, consulted all people at Jerusalem and near it, whom she thought likely to assist her in finding out the cross; and was credibly informed, that if she could find out the sepulchre, she would likewise find the instruments of the punishment; it being always the custom among the Jews to make a great hole near the place where the body of the criminal was buried, and to throw into it whatever belonged to his execution; looking upon all these things as detestable

* Council of Nice, 325.

objects, and which for that reason ought to be removed out of sight. The pious empress therefore ordered the profane buildings to be pulled down, the statues to be broken in pieces, and the rubbish to be removed ; and upon digging to a great depth, they discovered the holy sepulchre, and near it three crosses, also the nails which had pierced our Saviour's body, and the title which had been fixed to his cross. By this discovery, they understood that one of the three crosses was that which they were in quest of, and that the other two belonged to the two malefactors between whom our Saviour had been crucified. But whereas the title was found separate from the cross, a difficulty remained to distinguish which of the three was that on which our Divine Redeemer consummated his sacrifice for the salvation of the world. In this perplexity the holy bishop Macarius, knowing that one of the principal ladies of the city lay extremely ill, suggested to the empress to cause the three crosses to be carried to the sick person, not doubting but God would discover which was the cross they sought for. This being done, St. Macarius prayed that God would have regard to their faith, and after his prayer, applied the crosses singly to the patient, who was immediately and perfectly recovered by the touch of one of the three crosses, the other two having been tried without effect. St. Helena, full of joy for having found the treasure which she had so earnestly sought and so highly esteemed, built a church on the spot, and lodged it there with great veneration, having provided an extraordinary rich case for it. She afterward carried part of it to the emperor Constantine, then at Constantinople, who received it with great veneration : another part she sent or rather carried to Rome, to be placed in the church which she built there, called Of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem, where it remains to this day.

. . . . The title was sent by St. Helena to the same church in Rome, and deposited on the top of an arch, where it was found in a case of lead in 1492, as may be read at length in Bogius. The inscription, in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, is in red letters, and the wood was whitened: thus it was in 1492; but these colours are since faded. Also the words Jesus and Judæorum are eaten away. The board is nine, but must have been twelve inches long.

The main part of the cross St. Helena enclosed in a silver shrine and committed it to the care of St. Macarius, that it might be delivered down to posterity, as an object of veneration. It was accordingly kept with singular care and respect in the magnificent church which she and her son built in Jerusalem. (See the Lives of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Porphyrius of Gaza, &c.) St. Paulinus in his epistle to Severus, relates that though chips were almost daily cut off from it and given to devout persons, yet the sacred wood suffered thereby no diminution. It is affirmed by St. Cyril of Jerusalem, twenty-five years after the discovery, that pieces of the cross were spread all over the earth: he compares this wonder to the miraculous feeding of five thousand men as recorded in the gospel.

. . . . This history of the cross is related by St. Cyril of Jerusalem, and several other authors above-mentioned, who lived in the same age. It is therefore matter of surprise how James Basnage could so far forget them as to say that Gregory of Tours is the first of those who have spoken of it (Hist. de Juifs, l. 6, c. 14, sect. 10, page 1244): it is objected by some, that Eusebius makes no mention of it in his history of the life of Constantine, though he describes at large the building of the church of the sepulchre. But he is often guilty, like Josephus, of capital omissions in his history, to the great disappointment of his readers. But whether this omission in that place proceeded from carelessness or design, or from jealousy or any other motive, his silence ought not to be of any weight against the positive testimonies of so many unexceptionable witnesses. Montfaucon also takes notice, that Eusebius himself has clearly mentioned this miraculous event, in his comments on Psalm LXXXVII. p. 549, where he speaks of miracles wrought in his time near the sepulchre of Christ, and of the church that was built there by St. Helena. Nor can this passage be any more suspected of having been foisted in by interpolation, than that an omission of this fact happened in his historical works by the fault of transcribers. Nay a paragraph might be more easily passed over by the fault of copiers. . . . .

. . . . The holy sponge which served for this purpose (that of stanching the blood of those who suffered in this mode) at our

Lord's crucifixion is shown at Rome in the church of St. John Lateran, tinged with blood, and held in great veneration. The holy lance which opened his sacred side, is kept at Rome, but wants the point. Andrew of Crete says (de Exalt. Crucis) that it was buried, together with the cross. At least St. Gregory of Tours, (de Gl. Mart. c. 17,) and venerable Bede, (de Loc. Sanct. c. 2,) testify, that in their time it was kept at Jerusalem. For fear of the Saracens, it was buried privately at Antioch, in which city it was found in 1098, under ground, and wrought many miracles, as Robert the monk, (Hist. Hieros. i. 7,) and many eye witnesses testify. It was carried first to Jerusalem, and soon after to Constantinople. The emperor Baldwin II. sent the point of it to Venice, by way of pledge for a loan of money. St. Lewis, king of France, redeemed this relic, by paying off the sum it lay in pledge for, and caused it to be conveyed to Paris, where it is still kept in the Holy Chapel. The rest of the lance remained at Constantinople, after the Turks had taken that city, till in 1492 the sultan Bajazet sent it by an ambassador, in a rich beautiful case, to pope Innocent VIII. adding, that the point was in the possession of the king of France.

"The crown of thorns was given by the emperor Baldwin II. to St. Lewis, as to his cousin and great benefactor, because the city of Constantinople was no longer a place of security, being sorely pressed by the Saracens and Greeks; also in gratitude for his extraordinary contributions to the defence of the eastern empire and the holy places. St. Lewis afterward in requital voluntarily paid off a loan which that emperor had borrowed from the Venetians. William of Nangis, Vincent of Beauvais, and other French historians of that time, relate how this sacred treasure was with great devotion carried in a sealed case by holy religious men, by the way of Venice, into France. St. Lewis, with the queen's mother, his brother, and many prelates and princes met it five leagues beyond Sens. The pious king, and Robert of Artois, his second brother, being barefoot and in their shirts, carried it into that city to the cathedral of St. Stephen, accompanied by a numerous procession bathed in tears, which the sentiments of gratitude and religion drew from their eyes. It was thence conveyed to Paris, where it was received with extraordinary solemnity. St.

Lewis built the Holy Chapel, as it is called, for its reception, and annexed thereto a rich foundation of a chapter of canons. He afterward received from Constantinople the large portion of the cross which St. Helena had sent thither to her son, and other precious relics, with which she enriched the same place. Some thorns have been distributed from this treasure to other churches; and some have been made in imitation of them. They are usually very long.

"The nails with which Christ was fastened to the cross have been imitated by a like devotion. Calvin pretends to reckon fourteen or fifteen held for genuine, but names several never heard of but by himself, as that of St. Helena in Rome; for this is the same church with that of the Holy Cross; one at Sienna; one at Venice; one in the church of the Carmelites in Paris; one in the Holy Chapel; one at Dragüignan; and nobody knows where the village of Tenaille is, where he places another. Some multiplication of these nails has sprung up from the filings of that precious relic put into another nail made like it, or at least from nails which have touched it. The true nail kept at Rome in the church of the Holy Cross, has been manifestly filed, and is now without a point, as may be seen in all pictures of it. St. Charles of Borromæo, a prelate most vigorous in the approbation of relics, had many nails made like another which is kept at Milan, and distributed them after they had touched the holy nail. He gave one as a relic to king Philip II. These are all like that of Rome. St. Gregory the Great, and other ancient popes, sent raspings of the chains of St. Peter as relics, and sometimes put something of them into other chains made like them. F. Honoré de Sainte Marie, a judicious critic, relates a late authentic miracle performed by a heart made of taffety in resemblance of the heart of St. Theresa. As to the true nails, St. Helena threw one into the Adriatic sea to lay a violent storm in which she was in danger of perishing; and, according to St. Gregory of Tours, it immediately ceased. St. Ambrose (de ob. Theod, n. 47) and others testify, that her son Constantine the Great, fixed one in a rich diadem of pearls, which he wore on the most solemn occasions; and that, for a protection in his wars and dangers he set another in a costly bridle which he used; St. Gregory of Tours

says, that two were employed in it. It seems most probable that there were four nails, and that the feet were fastened with two nails apart, and not across with one. The Romans fixed little broad pieces of wood on the crosses of malefactors for the feet to rest upon, as Pliny mentions. See Lipsius, On the Cross.

"The pillar at which our Lord was scourged, was anciently kept at Jerusalem, with other holy relics, on Mount Sion, as is mentioned by St. Gregory Nazianzen, (Or. 1. in Julian.) St. Paulinus, ep. 34. St. Gregory of Tours, l. 1, de Glor. Mart. c. 7. Ven. Bede, de Locis Sanctis, c. 3. St. Prudentius and St. Jerome. It is shown at Rome through iron rails, in a little chapel in the church of St. Praxedes. Over the chapel it is written that Cardinal John Columna, apostolic legate in the East under pope Honorius III. brought it thither in the year 1223. The pillar is of grey, or black and white marble, one foot and a half long, and one foot diameter at the bottom, and eight inches at the top, where is an iron ring to which criminals were tied. Some think it is only the upper part of that which St. Jerome mentions: but there appear no marks of a fracture. The Jews scourged criminals, first on the back; then often on the belly, and also on both sides: which seems to have likewise been the Roman custom.

"The blood of Christ which is kept in some places, of which the most famous is that at Mantua, seems to be what has sometimes issued from the miraculous bleeding of some crucifix, when pierced in derision by Jews or Pagans, instances of which are recorded in authentic histories. See St. Thomas, p. 54. a. 2. ad 3. et 5. a. 5." —*Butler*, May 3, Note.

In times of 'low feeling' gone by, nay so lately as within seven years from this date, scarcely a clergyman of the English Protestant church could have been found who would have hesitated to reject with scorn the whole of the above as a farrago of *popish* fables, and as unworthy of a moment's serious regard or research. But it is otherwise in these days of 'deep views,' and it is now confessed that the English church has done ill in forfeiting her portion in these treasures of catholic antiquity. Nor is this all; for it is at length understood that these edifying matters, far from being—as had been ignorantly supposed—Romish legends, have come down almost as we now find them, from a high antiquity,

and are not to be questioned by any who profess submission to 'catholic principles.'

It happens however, that while these tales are intimately connected with the general question concerning the character of the Nicene church, a more than usual abundance of incidental evidence is in our hands, serving to put beyond all reasonable doubt the historical merits of the entire story concerning the 'invention of the cross,' and its accompaniments. To this evidence therefore we shall give the strictest attention—convinced as we are, that a thorough investigation of three or four of the most noted of the instances in which miraculous powers were professed by the church authorities of the fourth century, will fully satisfy all whose understandings are not impaired by habits of credulity.

Butler, who has blended in his narrative much of the contemporary evidence, seems, in the main, to have followed Paulinus of Nola. To him therefore we turn; and especially as his narrative is more ample and consistent than any elsewhere found. Moreover the epistle in which it occurs is, in itself, peculiarly characteristic of the temper of the times, and clearly indicates what was the tendency of the Church in that age of boasted purity.

The reader should remember that Paulinus, bishop of Nola in Campania, was one of the best informed men, as well as most elegant and accomplished writers of his times; and moreover, that while he lived in habits of intimacy with the principal personages of his day, he enjoyed a very widely diffused reputation as a bright ornament of the episcopal order. Paulinus died in 430, or 431. The church universal is said to owe to him the invention, or general use of bells;—at least as the means of summoning the congregation. How gross soever were the superstitions to which he was addicted, his writings indicate an amiable disposition, and a sincere devotion, or rather *devoutness*, which it may be hoped included some rudiments of christian piety.

The diffuseness of Paulinus will allow of much retrenchment, without deducting anything from the historical value of the evidence he is to furnish.* The bishop's friend Severus (Sulpitius) had ardently desired the benefit of some holy relics wherewith to con-

* The Eleventh Epistle, here referred to, will be found entire in the Supplement.

secrate a church he had lately built. Paulinus assures him—festis est autem Dominus, that, if he had possessed so much as a scrap of sacred remains beyond what was absolutely necessary for his own use, in dedicating the church he was himself finishing, he would have presented it to his 'Unanimity.' But as this could not be done, and as a common friend had a prospect of receiving an ample supply of this precious commodity from the East, he sends him, instead, that which will well supply its place; and indeed augment the benefits otherwise derivable from the ashes of the saints:—to wit, 'an atom of an atom' of the wood of the divine cross! This particle had been presented to a pious lady by St. John, then bishop of Jerusalem. 'Accept,' says he, 'a great gift in a little compass.—Accept a defence of present, and a pledge of eternal security. In this morsel your faith, nowise straitened by the diminutiveness of the object, will discern the virtue of the Cross' (entire).

The bishop however thinks it not unreasonable to satisfy the natural curiosity of his friend, as to the history and genuineness of this precious atom; he therefore proceeds to narrate the circumstances—in themselves so well worthy of being told, of the revelation and invention of the cross:—for, were this unknown, it would plainly be a matter of no small difficulty to prove the wood (now discovered) to be the very cross on which our Lord suffered. And surely, had it fallen into the hands of the Jews, it would long ago have been broken up and burned. It were idle to ask why it was so long hidden; since, had it not been hidden, it could not have been preserved.—It had been preserved, notwithstanding the spite of the Jews; and the profanations by which, during the long triumph of paganism, the holy spots had been afterwards desecrated. At length however a better order of things was to come in; and, in the times immediately preceding our own, the time of Constantine—that Prince of princes, his mother Helena, inspired from above, as the event proved, and employing the power and wealth of the empire, removed the opprobrium of the holy land, destroyed the temples and idols; and restored to Christianity the spots whence it had sprung. With the ready assent of her imperial son, the august mother, opening the treasures of the empire, and *devoting them*

entire to these sacred purposes, covered with magnificent basilics those spots which the Lord had consecrated by the mysteries of his passion and triumph.

The bishop is here naturally led to mention a remarkable fact, connected with the spot whence our Lord ascended to the heavens:—this spot, consecrated by the divine footsteps, would never, he says, endure to be covered by any sort of masonry or pavement; but invariably shook off and rejected the materials with which it was attempted to adorn it! So it was that, in the midst of the church of the Ascension, this spot retains its native surface, and exhibits to the eye of the worshipper, and offers to his hand, the marks of the divine feet!

At this point however we must pause a moment. It is very true that, within the church of the Ascension, the naked rock might be seen, bearing the impress of (the Lord's?) feet. But unhappily the times in which this fervour prevailed were not times of much scrupulosity;—and it appears that those who directed the church-building zeal of the empress, paid as little regard to the topography of the ancient city, and of its environs, as they did to the very clear affirmations of the Evangelist:—and this palpable instance of blundering, or of contempt of the truth of history, may serve well to put us on our guard in other instances, where the means of detection are not so directly available.

The testimony of Luke is precise and conclusive, who tells us that Jesus, ἐξήγαγεν αὐτοὺς ἔξω ἕως εἰς Βηθανίαν *—that is to say, nearly two miles from the eastern wall of the city, and to a spot concerning which there is no topographic ambiguity. But it suited the convenience of the church authorities of Jerusalem to bring the several holy places within a narrower circuit; and therefore, in contempt of the inspired history, the western brow of the mount of Olives, within the distance of half a mile from the city wall, was chosen as the spot of the Ascension;—and there the 'church of the Ascension' was erected;—and there the vestiges of our Lord's feet were offered to the eyes of believing pilgrims;—and there the naked spot was shown which no art of man could avail to cover with marble;—and on this spot was repeated, year after year, by the church of Jerusalem, the palpable lie that our

* The import of Acts i. 12 will presently be considered.

Lord had thence ascended to heaven, and that all endeavours to pave it had been defeated by the shuddering repugnance of the holy ground! So much for the—adoravimus ubi steterunt pedes ejus—and for the frauds by which these gainful superstitions were kept in credit!

We return to Paulinus, and the 'invention of the cross;'—a story, as we shall find, of similar quality; which, however, the bishop assures us presents 'a great and truly divine miracle.' What sort of miracle it was, the reader shall decide upon examination of the evidence.

Coming to Jerusalem, there to feast her eyes and nourish her piety with the sight of those sacred objects of which she had read and heard so much, the empress set herself to search with diligence for the cross of the Lord. But with what prospect of success, where no one could profess to guide her researches; inasmuch as the lapse of time, together with the long triumph of an impious superstition, had blotted out every trace of it which a religious sentiment and care might have preserved?

This acknowledgment of our Paulinus should here be remarked, as it excludes the hypothesis of modern writers—repeated and espoused by Châteaubriand—that the church of Jerusalem possessed, at this time, a traditionary knowledge of the 'holy spots.' Not only is this expressly denied by Paulinus; but the gross error adopted relative to the place of the ascension, would deprive of all authority any such tradition, even had it been pretended.

"But what could not be known by human means, was revealed to the faithful woman by the Holy Spirit—as a fit reward of her piety. This however came about in consequence of inquiries concerning the place of the passion, in prosecuting which she convened at Jerusalem, not only christian men, but the most learned of the Jews. [No such inquiries would have been needed, had the church possessed a traditionary knowledge of the spots.] Assured by the concurrent testimony of these—Christians as well as Jews, concerning the spot where our Lord suffered; and, no doubt, as Paulinus affirms, prompted by an instinctive anticipation of the discovery, she set her workmen in operation to make an excavation, which, with the aid of a band of the citizens and of the military, did not occupy much time. And at length, at a

great depth, and after an extensive clearance had been effected—contrary to the expectation of all, yet according to the faith of the queen, the treasury of the hidden cross was laid open! But now, inasmuch as three crosses were found apparently alike, as they had been fixed for our Lord, and the two malefactors, the general joy was damped by a pious hesitation and anxiety; lest haply they might select the gibbet of a felon, instead of the cross of the Lord; and at the same time commit a sacrilege, in rejecting as the stake of a thief, the Tree of salvation! In this perplexity the Lord tenderly regarded the distress of his servants, and granted to her who stood foremost in this instance, the light of wisdom in suggesting the means of discrimination. She directed that inquiry should be made for some one recently dead. No sooner said than done! A corpse is brought *—it is laid down, and one of the crosses is applied;—and then another, but death spurns the wood of the guilty! [the thieves]. But at length—resurrection declares the cross of the Lord! and at the touch of the wood of salvation—death put to flight, and the grave deprived of its tenant—the body is erect! While the living stand around, trembling and astounded, the dead stands forth! and like Lazarus of old, freed from the entanglements of his grave clothes, forthwith mixes with the crowd of spectators!"

We here pause to direct the reader's attention to the points kept in view in the present inquiry—namely, that the facts are such as imply, either a stupendous miracle—or a deliberately planned and elaborate fraud—a fraud contrived and executed by the church authorities, and accompanied by the awful solemnities of an appeal to heaven! and this miracle—or this knavery, was not a single act, but was the first in a series, continued, as we shall see, through a long course of time.

"Thus the cross of the Lord, at first hidden by the Jews at the time of the Passion, and concealed so long a time, was discovered, and which the heathen, in digging for the foundations of their temple, had failed to bring to light! Had it not been hidden by the divine hand, that now, when religiously sought for, it might be found? So, as was befitting the cross of Christ, found and

* The reader will observe in what way Butler smooths down the miracle at this point; in doing which however he follows some authorities.

proved to be such by the experiment of resurrection, it is honoured duly in the church erected on the spot—a church glittering with gilded roofs and golden altars, and where itself is enclosed in a shrine. Thence it is brought forth by the bishop in Passion week, *to be adored by the people*, the hierarch himself being the chief of the worshippers. At no other time is it produced except to gratify the earnest desires of pilgrims from distant countries—as a recompence for their toils: by the bishop's special favour, moreover, small fragments of the sacred wood are granted to devout petitioners. For this cross, though of inanimate matter, is endowed with a vital energy, so that from that time to this, it has afforded daily *to almost countless crowds*, portions of itself, and yet without detriment or diminution; but remains intact; always divisible to those who take from it, and always entire to those who worship it! But this imperishable virtue and indestructible solidity it has imbibed from the blood of that body which though it suffered death, saw no corruption!"

Sulpitius Severus, the friend of Paulinus, reports the main facts, as above, with some variations, showing that he had received his information from independent sources.

"At this time [in the reign of Constantine] Jerusalem was adorned with very numerous and magnificent churches. For Helena, the mother of the emperor, who reigned as empress with her son, when she had accomplished her strong desire of visiting Jerusalem, overthrew the temples and idols she found there; and soon after, availing herself of the treasures of the empire, built churches on the places of the Lord's passion, resurrection and ascension. It is a remarkable circumstance that the spot last trodden by the divine footsteps, when the Lord was taken up to heaven in a cloud, never could be covered with pavement like the rest of the floor: for whenever it was laid on it, the ground, impatient of every thing human, rejected it, and shook off the marble into the faces of those that brought it: forming thus a perpetual document of the dust being trodden by God, inasmuch as you may see the impression of his footsteps. But though what was thus trodden is daily and eagerly carried away by the faith of the multitudes who flock thither, the spot yet sustains no loss, for the earth still retains its own peculiar form, as if marked with the impress of his feet.

"Thanks to the same queen, the cross of the Lord was thus found, which could not be consecrated at the first, because of the opposition of the Jews; and afterwards, being buried in the ruins at the destruction of the city, deserved to be discovered only to one who sought it in faith. Helena, then, having ascertained the place of the passion, collected a band of military and a multitude of the neighbouring people, who were eager to please the queen, and commanded them to dig up the ground and clear away the extensive ruins that lay round about. Soon, as a reward for their faith and labour, three similar crosses were discovered, as they were formerly fixed for the Lord and the two thieves. But here the great difficulty of distinguishing the cross on which the Lord hung, disturbed the hearts and minds of all, lest by human error they should consecrate the gibbet of a thief instead of the cross of the Lord. They therefore contrived the plan of bringing some one recently dead to the crosses. No time was lost; for, as if by God's special providence, a funeral train was just passing by. The whole crowd ran towards it and snatched the corpse from the bier. Two of the crosses were first applied, in vain: but when it was touched by the cross of Christ, wonderful to tell! the corpse started, and stood up among the spectators of his own obsequies. The cross, thus found, was consecrated with suitable pomp." Hist. Sac. II. 33, 34.

Such was the history of the 'invention' as received by the western church. Theodoret, reporting the belief of the eastern church, affirms the same material facts, with some variations. "When," says he, "the three crosses came to light, one of which was undoubtedly that of our Lord, the bishop of Jerusalem at the time—the wise and divine Macarius, suggested the means of discrimination:—a certain noble lady who had long laboured under a severe disorder, was brought forward, and prayer having been made, and the three crosses severally applied to her, the true cross became manifest by the instantaneous cure it effected. As to the nails, the empress fixed one of them in the helmet of her son, as a means of averting the missiles of the enemy; and another she caused to be wrought into his bridle, which, while it secured his safety, fulfilled the prophecy of Zachariah, who so long before had predicted that 'the horses' bridles should be holiness to the

Lord.' A portion of the Lord's cross was given to the palace, and the rest, included in a silver coffer, was committed to the care of the bishop, to be preserved and handed down to posterity." Hist. Eccles. I. 17.

Jerome's undesigned evidence in this instance, is material. He was by no means backward in promoting the belief of edifying wonders—witness his Lives of St. Hilarion, and of Paul the hermit! But the legends he adopted were those a little remote either in time or place from himself:—at Bethlehem he was within a walk of Jerusalem, and he probably knew too much of the traffic in 'atoms of the true cross,' to be willing to compromise his reputation by seeming to vouch for the genuineness of these fragments. In writing to our Paulinus—then a simple monk, he labours to divert him from the purpose he had entertained of making a pilgrimage to the Holy Places — knowing as he did, that faith was exposed to fewer perils in the seclusion of a monastery in Spain, than it would be amidst the hubbub and the farces of the 'Holy City.' His language in this instance means more than it expresses.—"To the true worshippers," says Jerome, "all places are alike—Et de Hierosolymis et de Britannia æqualiter patet aula cœlestis." In illustration of his argument he affirms—what by the way is clearly untrue in fact, that a temple of Jupiter and a statue of Venus had occupied the very site of the crucifixion—thus showing how little credit is due to the topographical traditions of the Jerusalem church. What the trade in atoms of the cross was likely to be in a city such as Jerome describes 'the HOLY CITY' in his time—and he knew it well, we may easily imagine. Si crucis et resurrectionis loca non essent in urbe celeberrima, in qua curia, in qua aula militum, in qua scorta, mimi, scurræ, et omnia sunt, quæ solent in cæteris urbibus: vel si monachorum turbis solummodò frequentaretur, expetendum revera hujuscemodi cunctis monachis esset habitaculum. But things being as they are, it is the height of folly, after renouncing the world, to abide in a place like Jerusalem! De toto huc orbe concurritur. Plena est civitas universi generis hominum, et tanta utriusque sexus constipatio, ut quod alibi ex parte fugiebas, *hic totum sustinere cogaris.*

It appears then, not only that Jerusalem at this time was 'like

other cities'—and not better than others; but that it was constantly choked with crowds of visitors, of both sexes, from all parts of the world, few of whom would be content to leave it without a fragment of 'the true cross'—some probably would obtain the grace of many invaluable chips, to distribute among their friends at home. In a word, the providing these chips—every atom vouched for as genuine, must have given constant occupation to many hands—and all were to be paid, and a profit left with their employers. Meanwhile the integral cross remained, as Paulinus says, 'quotidie dividuam sumentibus, et semper totam venerantibus.' Such are the facts of the case, as illustrated by the oblique evidence of Jerome.

We are now in position for listening to a principal witness in this cause—the bishop of Jerusalem who succeeded Macarius, the finder of the cross at the instigation of the empress. Cyril, to whom we would most gladly give the benefit of any supposition that may exempt his reputation as a christian man from suspicion, refers incidentally only to the subject of the cross; and while these references are conclusive as to the principal fact, they are such as may be held to intimate that he had little if any personal concernment with the miraculous production of the 'wood of salvation.' Cyril of Jerusalem and Augustine, are the two Fathers who may be believed to have been the dupes of, rather than the actors in, the frauds of their times.

In the epistle of Cyril to the emperor Constantius, in which he affirms the appearance of a luminous cross suspended over the holy city, during several hours, he mentions the invention of the 'real cross,' as having rewarded the piety of his imperial father —Constantine. Ἐπὶ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ θεοφιλεστάτου, καὶ τῆς μακαρίας μνήμης Κωνσταντίνου τοῦ σοῦ πατρὸς, τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ σταυροῦ ξύλον ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις εὑρηται, τῆς θείας χάριτος τῷ καλῶς ζητοῦντι τὴν εὐσέβειαν τῶν ἀποκεκρυμμένων ἁγίων τόπων παρασχούσης τὴν εὕρεσιν. In his fourth catechesis—in attestation of the fact of Christ's death, he appeals to the spot on which the christian congregation was then assembled (erroneously assumed to be the Golgotha) and also, if the passage be genuine—to the 'wood of the cross,' with particles of which the whole world almost was then filled καὶ τοῦ ξύλου τοῦ σταυροῦ πᾶσα λοιπὸν ἡ οἰκουμένη

κατὰ μέρος ἐπληρώθη. In the tenth catechesis a similar passage occurs, which, if it be genuine, and it does not appear why it should be questioned, gives evidence to the same effect. — Τὸ ξύλον τὸ ἅγιον τοῦ σταυροῦ μαρτυρεῖ, μέχρι σήμερον παρ' ἡμῖν φαινόμενον, καὶ διὰ τῶν κατὰ πίστιν ἐξ αὐτοῦ λαμβανόντων ἐντεῦθεν τὴν οἰκουμένην πᾶσαν σχεδὸν ἤδη ἐπλήρωσαν.—namely, that pieces of the cross had been carried into almost all parts of christendom; and again, Ἐλέγχει με τοῦ σταυροῦ τὸ ξύλον κατὰ τὸ μικρὸν ἐντεῦθεν πάσῃ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ λοιπὸν διαδοθέν. Catechesis XIII. "If," says the teacher, "the facts of the gospel were denied by me, my unbelief would be reproved by this Golgotha—where we are assembled, and by the wood of the cross which, from this place, has been distributed over nearly all the world." This incidental evidence is conclusive in establishing the fact that chips of the cross found in the time of Constantine (or chips warranted as such) were in request throughout christendom; and that the commerce in this article long continued in full activity.

What this commerce must have been, if Chrysostom could say —in a passage which has frequently of late been cited, after reminding his Jewish and pagan opponents of the universal honour and efficacy attributed to the SIGN of the cross*—that the 'very wood' of the cross on which Christ had suffered, is eagerly sought after by all; and that atoms of it, set in gold, are hung about their necks by persons of both sexes. Αὐτὸ δὲ τὸ ξύλον ἐκεῖνο, ἔνθα τὸ ἅγιον ἐτάθη σῶμα καὶ ἀνεσκολοπίσθη, πῶς ἐστι περιμάχητον ἅπασι; καὶ μικρόν τι λαμβάνοντες ἐξ ἐκείνου πολλοὶ, καὶ χρυσῷ κατακλείοντες, καὶ ἄνδρες καὶ γυναῖκες τῶν τραχήλων ἐξάρτωσι τῶν ἑαυτῶν καλλωπιζόμενοι. . . . . .

If indeed the legend which we have now in hand could, for a moment, be considered deserving of a serious scrutiny as coming within the range of historic truth, we should insist with earnestness upon three critical facts therewith connected:—the first is the admission that no tradition had been preserved by the church at Jerusalem of the site of the passion and sepulture of Christ: the second, that if such a tradition did exist, it was demonstrably (as we shall see) at fault;—and the third—that, as upon the very spot where the crosses were found, the empress

* Contra Jud. et Gent. I. 698.

Helena erected the church of the Holy Sepulchre, our after inference concerning the position of the modern structure must apply in full force to the locality of the ancient church.

The evidence of Socrates, which appears to have been derived from some independent source, sustains these points. It is contained in cap. 17 of the first book of his Ecclesiastical History. He affirms that the early Christians had held the sepulchre of the Lord in especial honour; but that the enemies of Christ had succeeded, for a while, in diverting these pious regards from the spot, by erecting there a temple of Venus. But here it should be noted that the devastations of the war and siege, and a long period of confusion, during which Christianity had no footing in Jerusalem, had intervened between the times of this religious regard paid to the sepulchre, and the date of the erection of the heathen temple:— in fact, a generation had passed away in the interim, and the Christians who at length returned to the scene of confusion—a vast mound of rubbish, chose at hazard an abrupt rising, upon Acra, as the Golgotha, and place of Joseph's garden; — and they selected it in utter disregard of all topographic probability. Then the Roman authorities finding this spot resorted to by the Christians, and neither knowing nor caring any thing about the true Calvary or sepulchre, erected there the fane of their impure divinity.

Socrates affirms that, along with the three crosses were found the tablet, σανὶς, or board, affixed by Pilate to the cross of Christ, bearing its inscription ἐν διαφόροις γράμμασι, as well as the nails. The portion of the cross sent by the empress to her son, he caused to be inlaid in his own statue, at Constantinople; confidently believing that the city in which such a relic was preserved, must be secure from harm. In mentioning the means devised for discriminating the true cross, this writer adopts the more moderate story—of the *dangerous illness*, not actual death, of the lady to whom the three were applied.

Sozomen, having narrated the circumstances attending the memorable convention of bishops at Nice, opens the second book of his history with the scarcely less signal facts of the invention of the 'cross of salvation,' and of the 'holy nails.' The story, as told by this writer, contains some particulars, which it may be well to notice.

The bishops having returned, he says, to their several sees, the emperor, as a grateful expression of his satisfaction in having secured the unanimity of christendom, resolved to build a church upon the spot at Jerusalem, called Calvary. At the same time the empress-mother was visiting the holy city, and was earnestly bent upon finding the wood of the adorable cross, *περὶ πολλοῦ ἐποιεῖτο τοῦ σεβασμίου σταυροῦ τὸ ξύλον εὑρεῖν.* But neither was the discovery of this, nor even of the sacred sepulchre, an easy matter; inasmuch as the gentiles, in their desire to extinguish Christianity itself, had heaped a mass of rubbish upon the spot, so as to elevate the surface which before was depressed, even as it now appears; and having carried a wall around the place of the sepulchre, and Calvary, had paved it; and erected a temple of Venus, and a statue, so that Christians, coming thither to perform their devotions, might seem to be paying homage to the goddess; or otherwise would be alienated from the site.

In fact it appears that all certain knowledge of the spot (at first selected at hazard) had so far been lost that the historian inclines to the opinion, as most probable, of its having been *supernaturally revealed* to those concerned in the discovery, at the instigation of the empress.—When God has determined to reveal any fact, he needs not the recollections or records of man; but conveys it immediately to his servants in dream or vision.

Be this as it may (yet the circumstance is significant) when, at the bidding of the empress, deep excavations were made, and the rubbish removed, the cavern of the resurrection appeared; and, at a little distance, were found three crosses, and apart a board on which was the inscription, in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin —'Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.' This title however, being found apart from the cross to which it had been attached, left the serious difficulty unsolved, of discriminating the cross of the Lord from those of the thieves; the three having been thrown aside, as it might happen, by the soldiers. A divine interposition therefore was yet needed to secure a happy issue to the affair;—and this was in fact granted. Then follows the story of the noble lady, at the point of death, to whose chamber the three crosses—the bishop and empress attending, were carried:—two are applied to her without effect!—she appears actually expiring!—the third

is brought forward!—instantly the lady opens her eyes, and recovering her wonted strength, she starts from her couch, fully restored to health! "Some have affirmed," adds the historian, "that a dead man by the same means was raised." Sozomen II. 1.

We have seen in what way Jerome, whose long residence at Bethlehem had given him but a poor opinion of the traffic of the Holy City, passes over in silence the facts which were then noised through the world.* The motives of this silence seem to have influenced Eusebius also, who, at Cæsarea, must have had opportunities more than enough for estimating at their just value the gainful frauds of the 'Sepulchre.' What he may have said in the lost book—'The Description of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre,' we must not conjecture. The passages in the 'Life of Constantine,' relating to this subject, contain just so much as a man of sense and learning would choose to commit himself to, and nothing more.†

The bishops having, he says, returned to their sees, from the council of Nice, the emperor sought to signalize his piety by cleansing the holy sites from pagan impurities; and by erecting the most sumptuous structures on the spots so sacred in the eyes of Christians. With this view he removed from these places, not merely the idol temples, but vast quantities of materials; and in doing so, brought to light the actual cavern of the Sepulchre! On this spot was reared the church of the Holy Sepulchre; upon the masonry and decorations of which the wealth of the eastern

* Jerome's feeling as to these fables (when not himself adopting them) may be gathered from a passage in his Commentary upon Zachariah xiv. 20. Audivi à quodam rem sensu quidem pio dictam, sed ridiculam; clavos Dominicæ crucis è quibus Constantinus Augustus frenos equo suo fecerit, Sanctum Domini appellari. Hoc utrum accipiendum sit lectoris prudentiæ derelinquo. This casual allusion carries evidence as to the fact in Jerome's time of the existence of the pretended cross. That which this father considers ridiculous, although piously intended, is the application of the words of the prophecy to the emperor's bridle. With this reluctance to yield to these fooleries, it is no wonder that he says so little of the 'Invention' itself. Eusebius probably had received a disgust at the imbecile fanaticism of which Jerusalem was then the centre.

† The phrases he employs clearly imply the invention of the cross, although apart from other evidence they would leave us in the dark as to the facts. Τὸ γὰρ γνώρισμα τοῦ ἁγιωτάτου ἐκείνου πάθους ὑπὸ τῇ γῇ πάλαι κρυπτόμενον. Vita Const. III. 30.

provinces was profusely lavished; and the bishop of Jerusalem—Macarius, enjoined, in a letter addressed to him by the emperor, to aid in accomplishing the imperial will in this behalf. And if our author's abbreviated description of this structure be not wonderfully exaggerated, it must indeed have surpassed most of the palaces of the times. Nor can we doubt that a corresponding munificence marked the proceedings of the emperor and of his mother in whatever related to the credit and splendour of the Jerusalem church; especially as she withheld not her liberalities from the meanest of the chapels of Palestine — *μὴ δὲ τοὺς ἐν ταῖς βραχυτάταις πόλεσι παρόρωσα ναούς.*

Why Eusebius, while warmly commending the generous piety of the empress Helena, should say so little as to the invention of the cross, it is not for us to divine; nor need we, with our immediate object in view, employ time in the inquiry. That a cross, alleged to have been discovered in the manner above related, was in the keeping of the church at Jerusalem, a few years only later than the date of the 'Ecclesiastical History,' is a fact abundantly established by direct and incidental evidence; nor is it easy to imagine by what pretext a cross, with all the legends of the 'invention,' could have been brought forward at any subsequent period, if it had never before been heard of. Besides, such a supposition would throw the burden of the 'invention' upon the episcopate of Cyril, whom we should wish, by all fair means, to screen from any such imputation.

In fact, nothing is gained by assigning a later origin to the tale of the 'invention.' For surely the supposed *invention of the invention* of the cross, implies, at the least, as deep a criminality as did the invention itself; and this guilt, which perhaps may be palliated a little by allowing for the urgent inducements that overcame the consciences of Macarius and his clergy, would rest with aggravation upon the heads of Cyril and his colleagues, if we imagine him and them to have hatched the fraud, coolly and at leisure, twenty years afterwards.

The passage above cited from Chrysostom, occurs in the treatise 'Contra Judæos atque Gentiles,' which appears to have been composed at Antioch, in the autumn of 387: Hinc sequitur, says the learned editor, hunc seu librum seu sermonem, ubi id se

factum pollicetur, ante mensem Septembrem anni 387 adornatum fuisse. That is to say, sixty years after the visit of St. Helena to Palestine. But at *this time*, the usage of wearing bits of the true cross had become universal in the east, and in the west. We must therefore carry back the 'invention' to a time some years earlier; and therefore to a time coming within the period of Cyril's government of the church of Jerusalem, which, with intervals, extended from 350 to 386. Or if attributed to some one of those who occupied his chair in these intervals, nothing is gained for his reputation in supposing that he would connive at such a fraud—and such a fraud effected by a rival. Altogether the supposition least burdened with difficulties, is that which we find assumed as true history by Paulinus, by Sulpitius Severus, by Theodoret, Socrates, Sozomen, and others.*

Whatever may have been the actual history of the invention of the cross, the cross itself, during many centuries, was the object of idolatrous regard to the christian nations, and the occasion of a system of lucrative frauds, on the part of the Jerusalem clergy, whose business it was to supply hosts of pilgrims, from year to year, with chips, and each, 'warranted genuine.' The 'life-giving wood' is enumerated by the fathers of the second council of Nice, along with 'all holy pictures and images,' as a most fit object of adoration—under the constant condition (insisted upon also by pagan apologists of idol worship) that it is not the *wood* or the *marble* that is worshipped; but the holy persons or things represented. As to pieces of the cross, they possessed every kind of supernatural efficacy; nor, after we have heard that the blood of St. Januarius has several times silenced Vesuvius, can we think it strange that an atom of the cross should put out a fire: the instance cited below may amuse some readers, and edify others. It is of high antiquity.†

As if to signalize the vanity of this superstition, the 'true

* Pope Eusebius, in an epistle to the bishops of Tuscia and Campagnia, enjoins the observance of the festival commemorating the invention of the cross; which he says had occurred during his own pontificate. Crucis ergo Domini nostri Jesu Christi quæ *nuper*, nobis gubernacula sanctæ Romanæ ecclesiæ tenentibus, quinto nonas Maii inventa est. — Acta Concil. I. p. 243.

† See Supplement.

cross' fell at length into the hands of the infidels, in the fatal battle which broke the christian power in Palestine (1187). Long had this spurious relic, and ill-omened monument of the spiritual debauchery of the Nicene age, been trusted to, as a sure defence against all harms: Certum solebat esse tutamen, says pope Gregory VIII., et contra paganorum incursus desiderata defensio. It had been carried from Jerusalem to the head-quarters of the christian forces in Galilee, then unhappily weakened by the dissensions of the chiefs. Counsels—absurd or traitorous, gave to Saladin an occasion of which he knew how to take terrible advantage:—all was lost, but the reputation of valour;—all, and the true cross! Capta est crux Dominica, trucidati episcopi, captus est rex!*

I should think it an insult to the reader's understanding to attempt an exposure of the hundred absurdities involved in the supposition that the three crosses produced by the bishop of Jerusalem, at the demand of the empress, were indeed the three crosses of Golgotha. Even if otherwise it could be entertained, which, as we shall see, it cannot, the story is refuted by its intrinsic absurdities, and by its overdone specialities. The one cross was not enough—but there must be the three; and the nails; and the Roman spear; and the title (and the sponge and the blood, according to some.) If however there be any who harbour a lingering wish to believe that the holy sepulchre and true cross of St. Helena are what they are alleged to be, I would gladly leave them in undisturbed possession of this their picturesque persuasion, were it not important to the present argument to place before the intelligent and reasonable reader, evidence which so strikingly illustrates the temper and modes of proceeding that characterised the Nicene age. In doing this I avail myself with no ordinary pleasure of the invaluable 'Biblical Researches in Palestine' of Professor Robinson, and Rev. E. Smith—a work which opens a new era in sacred geography and topographic criticism. The many and important results of these researches have been elicited by a determined adherence to the rule of rejecting altogether the monkish traditions, concerning the spots of biblical history, and which most of them are to be traced to the fourth century; while a careful examina-

* Acta Concil. VI. Part 2, p. 1890.

tion of the surface and of its antiquities, as compared with the traditions of the people of the country, and especially when sustained by a radical identity of names, has served to bring the modern geography of Palestine into an intelligible accordance with the ancient.

The devastation of the city after the siege by Titus—the long interval subsequently, during which it was wholly or nearly forsaken by Jews and Christians—and the utter overthrow which followed upon the capture of Jerusalem under Adrian, had not merely spread confusion over the site, but had broken the chain of topographic tradition; so that when, a century later, the city was again resorted to by the Christians, nothing less than a scrupulous and well-informed survey of the ground, and of its ruins, could have availed to recover, with any certainty, the lost knowledge of particular spots. In the place of any such intelligent care, stolid ignorance and fanatic infatuation took their freakish course over the rugged surface, bestowing the biblical designations upon eminences, caverns, or ruins, at hazard. Such, for the most part, was the origin of those traditions which the church of the fourth century adopted, and has handed down, in the keeping of the monks, to the too easy faith of modern travellers.

But the travellers now before us have followed another track; and in rejecting the fables of fifteen centuries, they have restored to historical science the long-lost biblical Palestine. After adverting to the facts which have already been here adduced, and citing Eusebius, Dr. Robinson continues—"Not a word, not a hint, by which the reader would be led to suppose that the mother of the emperor had any thing to do with the discovery of the holy sepulchre, or the building of a church upon the spot. But, as I have already remarked, this (*the Nicene era*) was the age of credulous faith, as well as of legendary tradition and invention, if not of pious fraud; and this silence of the father of church history, respecting Helena, was more than made good by his successors. .... However this may be, and notwithstanding the silence of Eusebius (and of the pilgrim of Bordeaux) there would seem to be hardly any fact of history better accredited than this alleged discovery of the true cross. All the historians of the following century relate the circumstances, as with one voice, and ascribe it

to the enterprise of Helena. But this is not all; Cyril," &c. . . . Our author here adduces the passages which have been already cited from Cyril, and adds one from Jerome, who, in his epistle to Eustochium, mentions the circumstance that Paula, at Jerusalem, not only performed her devotions in the holy sepulchre, but also prostrated herself before the cross in adoration. — Prostrataque ante crucem, quasi pendentem Dominum cerneret, adorabat.

"It would seem, however, to be as little reasonable to doubt the existence of the alleged true cross at that early period, as it would be to give credit to the legendary circumstances related of its discovery. It was probably a work of pious fraud." (What else *could it be*, if not a genuine miracle, and a *true* cross?)

After following the history of Jerusalem through the course of time, to the present moment, the author reverts to the subject of the church of the Holy Sepulchre, and with equal candour and acumen states the question so long and hotly agitated concerning the authenticity of the tradition which vouches for the spot as the true Golgotha and place of the Sepulchre. The determination of this, in itself, unimportant controversy, bears so directly upon my immediate purpose that I shall lay before the reader the substance of the section which Dr. Robinson devotes to the subject. Biblical Researches: vol. ii. pp. 64—80.

"The place of our Lord's crucifixion, as we are expressly informed, was without the gate of the ancient city, and yet nigh to the city.* The sepulchre, we are likewise told, was nigh at hand, in a garden, in the place where Jesus was crucified.† It is not therefore without some feeling of wonder, that a stranger unacquainted with the circumstances, in arriving in Jerusalem at the present day, is pointed to the place of crucifixion and the sepulchre in the midst of the modern city, and both beneath one roof. This latter fact, however unexpected, might occasion less surprise; for the sepulchre was nigh to Calvary. But beneath the same roof are further shown the stone on which the body of our Lord was anointed for burial, the fissure in the rock, the holes in which

* Heb. xiii. 12. John xix. 20. The same is also implied in John xix. 17; Matt. xxvii. 32.

† John xix. 41, 42.

the crosses stood, the spot where the true cross was found by Helena, and various other places said to have been connected with the history of the crucifixion; most of which it must have been difficult to identify even after the lapse of only three centuries; and particularly so at the present day, after the desolations and numerous changes which the whole place has undergone.

"The difficulty arising from the present location in the heart of the city, has been felt by many pious minds, from the days of St. Willibald and Jacob de Vitry, to our own time; but it has usually been evaded, by assuming that the city was greatly enlarged under Adrian, toward the north or west; or sometimes, that the ancient city occupied a different site. The first to take an open stand against the identity of the holy places, was Korte the German bookseller, who visited Jerusalem in A.D. 1738, at the same time with Pococke. While the learned Englishman slightly passes over this topic, entering into no discussion and expressing no opinion, the honest simplicity of the unlearned German led him to lay before his countrymen a plain account of the impression made upon his own mind, and his reasons for distrusting the correctness of the common tradition. Unacquainted with the historical facts, he confines himself solely to a common-sense view of the case, and urges the impossibility that the present site could have been without the ancient city, because of its nearness to the former area of the Jewish temple. The reasoning of Korte seems to have made a considerable impression among the Protestants of the continent, and is often referred to: but he had no follower among the travellers of the last century; though in the present, the voices of powerful assailants and defenders are heard among both Catholics and Protestants. Châteaubriand led the way in a most plausible defence; and Dr. Clarke, a later writer, though an earlier traveller, followed with a violent attack. In later years the parties have been reversed: Scholz, Catholic professor at Bonn, declares that the place of the crucifixion cannot have been where it is now pointed out; because this spot must have been within the ancient city, though he strangely enough admits the identity of the sepulchre. On the other hand several Protestant travellers and writers take sides with the tradition, and support the genuineness both of the sepulchre and Golgotha.

" A true estimate of this long-agitated question must depend on two circumstances. As there can be no doubt that both Golgotha and the sepulchre lay outside of the ancient city, it must first be shown that the present site may also anciently have been without the walls. Or, should this in itself appear to be impossible, then it must be shown, that there were in the fourth century historical or traditional grounds for fixing upon this site, strong enough to counterbalance such an apparent impossibility. The following observations may help to throw some light on both these points.

" Our preceding investigations respecting the temple and the ancient walls of Jerusalem, seem to show, conclusively, that the modern city occupies only a portion of the ancient site; a part of Zion and a tract upon the north, which were formerly included in the walls, being now left out. The nature of the ground and the traces of the ancient third wall which are found, demonstrate also that the breadth of the city from east to west is the same now as anciently. There can therefore be no question that the site of the present holy sepulchre falls within the ancient city as described by Josephus. But as the third or exterior wall of that writer was not erected until ten or twelve years after the death of Christ, it cannot here be taken into account; and the question still arises, whether the present site of the sepulchre may not have fallen without the *second* or interior wall; in which case all the conditions of the general question would be satisfied.

" This second wall, as we have seen, began at the gate of Gennath, near the tower of Hippicus, and ran to the fortress Antonia on the north of the temple. Of the date of this erection we are nowhere informed; but it must probably have been older than the time of Hezekiah, who built within the city a pool, apparently the same which now exists under his name.* We have then three points for determining the probable course of this wall; besides the general language of Josephus and the nature of the ground. We repaired personally to each of these three points, in order to examine there this very question; and the first measure-

* This second wall was also apparently the northern wall attacked by Antiochus, adjacent to which there was a level tract or plain.—Joseph. Antiq. XIII. 8. 2.

ment I took in Jerusalem, was the distance from the western side of the area of the temple or great mosque to the church of the Holy Sepulchre. I measured from the western entrance of that area on a direct course along the street by the hospital of Helena, to the street leading north from the Bazar; and then from this street to a point in front of the great entrance of the church. The whole distance proved to be 1,223 feet, or about 407 yards, which is 33 yards less than a quarter of an English mile. On viewing the city from the remains of the ancient Hippicus, as well as from the site of Antonia, we were satisfied, that if the second wall might be supposed to have run in a straight line between those points, it would have left the church of the Holy Sepulchre without the city; and thus far have settled the topographical part of the question. But it was not less easy to perceive, that in thus running in a straight course, the wall must also have left the pool of Hezekiah on the outside; or, if it made a curve sufficient to include this pool, it would naturally also have included the site of the sepulchre; unless it made an angle expressly in order to exclude the latter spot. And further, as we have seen, Josephus distinctly testifies, that the second wall ran in a circle or curve, κυκλούμενον, obviously towards the north. Various other circumstances also, which go to support the same view, such as the nature of the ground, and the ancient towers at the Damascus gate, have already been enumerated, (vol. i. pp. 462—464.) Adjacent to the wall on the north, there was a space of level ground, on which Antiochus could erect his hundred towers. All this goes to show that the second wall must have extended further to the north than the site of the present church. Or again, if we admit that this wall ran in a straight course, then the whole of the lower city must have been confined to a small triangle, and its breadth between the temple and the site of the sepulchre, a space of less than a quarter of an English mile, was not equal to that of many squares in London and New York. Yet we know that this lower city at the time of the crucifixion was extensive and populous; three gates led from it to the temple; and ten years later Agrippa erected the third wall far beyond the limits of the present city, in order to shelter the extensive suburbs which before were unprotected. These suburbs could not well have arisen within the short interval of

ten years; but must already have existed before the time of our Lord's crucifixion.

"After examining all these circumstances repeatedly upon the spot, and as I hope without prejudice, the minds of both my companion and myself were forced to the conviction, that the hypothesis which makes the second wall so run as to exclude the alleged site of the Holy Sepulchre, is on topographical grounds untenable and impossible. If there was prejudice upon my own mind, it was certainly in favour of an opposite result; for I went to Jerusalem strongly prepossessed with the idea, that the alleged site might have lain without the second wall. But even if such a view could be admitted, the existence of populous suburbs on this part is strongly at variance with the probability, that here should have been a place of execution with a garden and sepulchre. The tombs of the ancients were not usually within their cities, nor among their habitations; and excepting those of the kings on Zion, there is no evidence that sepulchres existed in Jerusalem."

Dr. Robinson then proceeds to inquire—

"Whether there were probably, in the time of Constantine, any such strong historical or traditional grounds for fixing upon this site, as to counterbalance the topographical difficulties, and lead us on the whole to a different conclusion." These grounds, such as they are, he states, as advanced by Châteaubriand, who has given to the opinion he adopts all the advantage of which it is susceptible. The case on this side is briefly this—

"The first christian church at Jerusalem was gathered immediately after the resurrection and ascension of our Lord; and soon became very numerous. All its members must have had a knowledge of the sacred places. They doubtless also consecrated buildings for their worship; and would naturally erect them on sites rendered memorable by miracles. Not improbably the holy sepulchre itself was already honoured in this manner. At any rate there was a regular succession of Jewish christian bishops, from the apostle James, down to the time of Adrian, who could not but have preserved the christian traditions; and although during the siege by Titus the church withdrew to Pella, yet they soon returned, and established themselves among the ruins. In the course of a few months' absence, they could not have forgotten

the position of their sanctuaries; which moreover, being generally without the walls, had probably not suffered greatly from the siege. And that the sacred places were generally known in the age of Adrian, is proved incontestably by the fact, that, in rebuilding Jerusalem, that emperor set up a statue of Venus upon Calvary, and one of Jupiter over the Holy Sepulchre. Thus the folly of idolatry, by its imprudent profanation, only made more public 'the foolishness of the cross.' From that time onward till the reign of Constantine, there was again a regular succession of bishops of gentile origin; and the sacred places could not of course have been forgotten."

I must here remind the reader that, in the citations given above from Paulinus, Sulpitius Severus, Theodoret, Socrates, and Sozomen, it is expressly affirmed that diligent inquiry had to be made under the direction of the bishop as to the probable site of the holy sepulchre, which at last was determined by 'revelation' rather than any extant tradition! What becomes then of Châteaubriand's assumptions and inferences?

Dr. R. then proceeds to examine this argument, after admitting that at first view it is strong, and that it had at one time made a deep impression on his own mind; though this impression was again weakened and in part done away, when he found Châteaubriand 'admitting the alleged miracles which are said to have accompanied the finding of the cross.' As to the long list of subsequent testimonies adduced by that writer, it is a mere work of supererogation; 'for who has ever doubted the identity of the present site with that selected under Constantine?'

Upon this point however I wish to fix the reader's attention. By those who have not made themselves acquainted with the topographical history of Jerusalem it might be imagined, as a mode of evading the inference we have in view, that the *present* Church of the Holy Sepulchre does not stand upon the site of the ancient church, and therefore that our reasoning with respect to the one, will not apply to the other. There is no room for any such evasion, and if it appears certain that the site of the church could not have been that of the crucifixion and sepulchre, then the complicated fraud of the 'invention' and the long train of

miracles enacted by the Jerusalem authorities from the year 326 onward, will stand revealed in a just light, and our inference as to the line of conduct sanctioned by the leaders of the Nicene church will be established. Dr. R. proceeds—

"That the early Christians at Jerusalem must have had a knowledge of the places where the Lord was crucified and buried, there can be no doubt; that they erected their churches on places consecrated by miracles, and especially on Calvary and over our Lord's sepulchre, is a more questionable position. There is at least no trace of it in the New Testament, nor in the history of the primitive church. The four Gospels, which describe so minutely the circumstances of the crucifixion and resurrection, mention the sepulchre only in general terms; and although some of them were written thirty or forty years after these events, yet they are silent as to any veneration of the sepulchre, and also as to its very existence at that time. The writers do not even make in behalf of their Lord and Master the natural appeal which Peter employs in the case of David, 'that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.' The great apostle of the gentiles too, whose constant theme is the death and resurrection of our Lord and the glory of his cross, has not in all his writings the slightest allusion to any reverence for the *place* of these great events or the instrument of the Saviour's passion. On the contrary, the whole tenour of our Lord's teaching and that of Paul, and indeed of every part of the New Testament, was directed to draw off the minds of men from an attachment to particular times and places, and to lead the true worshippers to worship God, not merely at Jerusalem or in mount Gerizim, but everywhere 'in spirit and in truth.' The position that the christian churches in the apostolic age, were without the walls of the city, is a mere fancy, springing from the similar location of the sepulchre; and still more fanciful and absurd is the assertion, that those churches, if any such there were, might have escaped destruction during the long siege by Titus.

"The alleged regular succession of bishops, from the time of St. James to the reign of Adrian, is also a matter of less certainty than is here represented. Eusebius, the only authority on the subject, lived two centuries afterwards; and says expressly, that

he had been able to find no document respecting them, and wrote only from report.*

"More important is the circumstance related in connexion with Adrian, that this emperor erected heathen temples on Golgotha and over the sepulchre, about A.D. 135. Could this be regarded as a well ascertained fact, it would certainly have great weight in a decision of the question. But what is the evidence on which it rests? The earliest witness is again Eusebius, writing after the death of Constantine; who merely relates that a temple of Venus had been erected over the sepulchre by impious men, but says not one word of Adrian. The historians of the next century relate the same fact in the same manner. It is Jerome alone, writing about A.D. 395, or some sixty years later than Eusebius, who affirms, that an idol had stood upon the spot from the time of Adrian. There is moreover a discrepancy in the accounts. Eusebius and the other historians speak only of a temple of Venus over the sepulchre. Jerome on the other hand places the marble statue of Venus on the 'rock of the cross,' or Golgotha, and an image of Jupiter on the place of the resurrection. Here the latin father is probably wrong; for Eusebius is an eye-witness; and the former is therefore equally liable to have been wrong in ascribing these idols to Adrian.

"What then after all is the amount of the testimony relative to an idol erected over the place of the resurrection, and serving to mark the spot? It is simply, that writers *ex post facto*, have mentioned such an idol as standing, not over the sepulchre known of old as being that of Christ, but *over the spot fixed upon by Constantine as that sepulchre*. Their testimony proves conclusively that an idol stood upon *that* spot; but it has no bearing to show that this spot was the true sepulchre. Eusebius, the contemporary and eye-witness, makes no mention of any tradition connected with the idol. Jerome, sixty years later, is the only one to ascribe it to Adrian; and Sozomen, in the middle of the fifth century, is the first to remark, that the heathen erected it in the hope, that the Christians who came to pay their devotions at the sepulchre, would thus have the appearance of worshipping an idol.

* Hist. Eccles. IV. 5.

Yet from these slender materials, the skilful pen of Châteaubriand has wrought out a statement so definite and specious, that most readers who have not had an opportunity of investigation, have probably regarded the matter as a well established fact.

" Thus then the positive proofs alleged in favour of an earlier tradition respecting the holy sepulchre, vanish away; and there remains only the possibility, that a fact of this nature might have been handed down in the Church through the succession of bishops and other holy men. Yet there are also various circumstances, which militate strongly even against such a probability. One of these is the utter silence of Eusebius and of all following writers, as to the existence of any such tradition. Nor is this all; for the language both of Eusebius, and of Constantine himself, seems strongly to imply, that no such former tradition could have been extant. Eusebius relates, in speaking of the place of the resurrection, that 'hitherto impious men, or rather the whole race of demons through their instrumentality, had made every effort to deliver over that illustrious monument of immortality to darkness and oblivion.' They had covered it with earth, and erected over it a temple of Venus; and it was this spot, thus desecrated and wholly given over to forgetfulness and oblivion, that the emperor, 'not without a divine intimation, but moved in spirit by the Saviour himself,' ordered to be purified and adorned with splendid buildings. Such language, certainly, would hardly be appropriate, in speaking of a spot well known and definitely marked by long tradition. The emperor too, in his letter to Macarius, regards the discovery of 'the token of the Saviour's most sacred passion, which for so long a time had been hidden underground,' as 'a miracle beyond the capacity of man sufficiently to celebrate or even to comprehend.' The mere removal of obstructions from a well known spot, could hardly have been described as a miracle so stupendous. Indeed the whole tenour of the language both of Eusebius and Constantine goes to show, that the discovery of the holy sepulchre was held to be the result, not of a previous knowledge derived from tradition, but of a supernatural interposition and revelation.

" . . . . We have seen that the supposed cross was certainly in existence so early as the time of Cyril, only some twenty years

after its alleged discovery by Helena. It would seem therefore to be a necessary conclusion, that this main circumstance in the agency ascribed to Helena, must have had some foundation in fact; and however difficult it may be to account for the silence of Eusebius, it would also appear not improbable, that these later accounts may be in the main correct, at least so far as they ascribe to Helena the chief agency in searching for and discovering the supposed holy sepulchre. Yet even in these accounts she is nowhere said to have acted in consequence of any known tradition; but only to have received a 'divine suggestion,' and also to have inquired diligently of the ancient inhabitants, and especially, according to some, of the Jews. At any rate therefore the place of the sepulchre was not then a matter of public notoriety; and the alleged miracle, which attended her discovery of the true cross, serves at least to show the degree of ready credulity with which the search was conducted.

"Thus far the balance of evidence would seem to be decidedly against the probable existence of any previous tradition. But we are now prepared to advance a step further; and to show, that even were it possible to prove the existence of such a prevailing tradition, still this would not have been of sufficient authority to counterbalance the strength of the topographical objections. The strongest assertion which can be made in the case, as we have seen, is the general probability, that such a tradition might have been handed down for three centuries in the Church through the succession of bishops and other holy men. But for the value of such a tradition, supposing it to have existed, we have a decisive test, in applying the same reasoning to another tradition of precisely the same character and import. The place of our Lord's ascension must have been to the first Christians at Jerusalem an object of no less interest than his sepulchre, and could not but have been equally known to them. The knowledge of it too would naturally have been handed down from century to century through the same succession of bishops and holy men. In this case, moreover, we know that such a tradition did actually exist before the age of Constantine, which pointed out the place of the ascension on the summit of the mount of Olives. Eusebius, writing about A. D. 315, ten years or more before the journey of Helena, speaks expressly,

as we have already seen, of the many Christians who came up to Jerusalem from all parts of the earth, not as of old to celebrate a festival, but to behold the accomplishment of prophecy in the desolations of the city, and to pay their adorations on the summit of the mount of Olives, where Jesus gave his last charge to his disciples, and then ascended into heaven.* Yet notwithstanding this weight of testimony, and the apparent length of time and unbroken succession through which the story had been handed down, the tradition itself is unquestionably false; since it is contradicted by the express declaration of Scripture. According to St. Luke, Jesus 'led out his disciples as far as to Bethany, and blessed them; and while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.'† Yet Helena erected a church upon the mount of Olives; and assuredly there could have been no tradition better accredited in respect to the Holy Sepulchre. Indeed the fact that no pilgrimages were made to the latter, goes strongly to show that there was no tradition respecting it whatever."

Dr. Robinson goes on to illustrate the fallaciousness of the ancient topographic traditions in the instance of the 'grotto of the nativity,' at Bethlehem; and then says—

"The two traditions which we have now examined, both present a much stronger case, than any thing which ever has been or can be urged in behalf of the supposed holy sepulchre. Yet one of them at least, and probably both, have no foundation in historic truth. On this ground then, as well as on all others, the alleged site of the sepulchre is found to be without support. Thus on every view which I have been able to take of the question, both

* Euseb. Demonst. Evang. VI. 18.

† Acts i. 12. Luke says, 'they returned unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath-day's journey.' *As to the measurement* therefore, this accords precisely with the same writer's testimony, Luke xxiv. 50, 51; and is dissonant only in the name—a disagreement easily explained in looking at the map of Jerusalem—Bethany being a short distance *beyond* the mount of Olives, *on the same path*, the return of the disciples might easily be so designated. But both statements alike contradict the ancient tradition, on the strength of which the church of the ascension was erected on the western brow of the mount of Olives, which, in a direct line, is only two thousand feet from the city wall, and barely half a mile from the opposite gate, near the pool of Bethesda. This spot was neither 'a sabbath-day's journey from Jerusalem,' nor was it, 'as far as Bethany.'

topographical and historical, whether on the spot or in the closet, and in spite of all my previous prepossessions, I am led irresistibly to the conclusion, that the Golgotha and the tomb now shown in the church of the Holy Sepulchre, are not upon the real places of the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord. The alleged discovery of them by the aged and credulous Helena, like her discovery of the cross, may not improbably have been the work of pious fraud. It would perhaps not be doing injustice to the bishop Macarius and his clergy, if we regard the whole as a well-laid and successful plan for restoring to Jerusalem its former consideration, and elevating his see to a higher place of influence and dignity.

"If it be asked where then are the true sites of Golgotha and the sepulchre to be sought? I must reply, that probably all such search can only be in vain. We know nothing more from the Scriptures, than that they were near each other, without the gate, and nigh to the city, in a frequented spot. This would favour the conclusion, that the place was probably upon a great road leading from one of the gates; and such a spot would only be found upon the western or northern side of the city, on the roads leading towards Joppa or Damascus."

Upon the general character of the proceedings and traditions of the ancient church, this accomplished traveller has expressed himself in a manner which powerfully confirms the representations made in these numbers. In commencing his section on the 'Topography and Antiquities' of Jerusalem, he requests his readers "to bear in mind, that for the lapse of more than fifteen centuries Jerusalem has been the abode not only of mistaken piety, but also of credulous superstition, not unmingled with pious fraud. . . . . The FOURTH CENTURY appears to have been particularly fruitful in the fixing of these localities (the alleged sites of the gospel history) and in the dressing out the traditions, or rather legends, which were attached to them. . . . . This is the point to which I would particularly direct the reader's attention—that all ecclesiastical tradition respecting the ancient places in and throughout Palestine IS OF NO VALUE, except so far as it is supported by circumstances known to us from the Scriptures, or from other contemporary testimony." Bib. Research. vol. i, pp. 371—374.

Every line of the preceding extracts is pertinent to the question in hand; and this question touches closely the general argument in which we are engaged. Let us then sum up the evidence that has been adduced.

It appears that Jerusalem, after its *two* devastations, by the Roman arms, had almost fallen from the notice or memory of mankind; nor did it take a prominent place in the ecclesiastical economy of christendom during the eras of pagan persecution. But soon before the visible triumph of christianity, and especially at the moment of that triumph, the mingled fanaticism and superstition which were then spreading like a frenzy through the church, took a sudden direction toward Palestine, as the scene of the Gospel history. This rush of the winds from all quarters of the Roman world fanned the embers of religious feeling that were almost gone out, among the rubbish and ruins of Zion. The church authorities there awoke to nurse the flame thus rekindled; and in a very short time, as well the eastern as the western nations, fixed their gaze upon the towering blaze.—The Holy City became, as in a moment, the centre of romantic devotional sentiment to all the world.

It was just as this movement was setting in toward Palestine, that the empress-mother (unquestionably sincere and devout) with all the fervour of eighteen, and the childishness of eighty, set out on a pilgrimage—not so much to visit the holy sites, as to exhume, or to create them. Unhappily for the consciences of the Syrian clergy, this exalted lady carried with her the treasury-key of the eastern provinces; or, we might say, a promissory note, bearing her son's signature, but left for herself or her attendant clergy to fill up, at their pleasure, as to the amount. In setting out on this 'voyage of discovery,' she proclaimed her intention to lay a tenfold offering of gold, frankincense, and myrrh at the feet of the Saviour, or of his ministers. Alas for them!—the enormous bribe was far more than enough to secure their acting a traitorous and shameless part. And the blasphemous frauds then contrived and perpetrated, continued to debauch the clergy of Palestine, and other countries, and to degrade and befool the people of christendom, during long centuries; and even to the present moment.

The main facts connected with the finding the alleged cross, and its accompaniments, are not to be doubted. The existence at Jerusalem of this pretended cross about the time affirmed, is vouched for by very many incidental proofs. And in consequence of the invention, and of the traffic carried on in bits of 'the Wood of Salvation,' Jerusalem became one of the most frequented, disorderly, and licentious cities of the Roman world. Jerome's evidence to this effect, already cited, is unexceptionable and conclusive: or if it needed confirmation, we find it in the very explicit statements of a contemporary—an eye-witness also, and one who, beyond most of his peers, eagerly promoted the growing superstitions of the times. The language of Gregory Nyssen on this subject will be listened to with peculiar attention. He had lately visited the Holy Sites, and, with the animation of disappointment and disgust, he (as Jerome had done in a similar instance) dissuades his friends from undertaking a pilgrimage. After adverting to the perils to which ascetic, and especially female virtue is exposed amid the chances of a journey in the East, and after insisting with force on other reasons, he very pertinently observes, that if, as some seemed to think, the graces of heaven were more copiously afforded at and near Jerusalem than elsewhere, immoralities would not abound in it, as in fact they do, or vice be the very epidemic of Palestine. No form of impurity can be named that was not shamelessly perpetrated there;—wickedness, and adulteries, and thefts, and idolatries, and sorceries, and envyings and murders.—Such was the profligacy of the people (of Jerusalem) that in no city was there such a promptness to assassinations:—like so many beasts of prey did the inhabitants shed each other's blood, and this at the impulse of the most sordid motives.* How does it appear then, asks this Father, that grace is shed more copiously upon those who occupy the sacred soil, than upon others? After meeting and satisfying the objection likely, as he

* Ἔπειτα καὶ εἰ ἦν πλέον ἡ χάρις ἐν τοῖς Ἱεροσόλυμα τόποις, οὐκ ἂν ἐπεχωρίαζε τοῖς ἐκεῖ ζῶσιν ἡ ἁμαρτία· νῦν μέν τοι οὐκ ἔστιν ἀκαθαρσίας εἶδος, ὃ μὴ τολμᾶται παρ' αὐτοῖς. Καὶ πονηρίαι, καὶ μοιχεῖαι, καὶ κλοπαὶ, καὶ εἰδωλολατρεῖαι, καὶ φαρμακεῖαι, καὶ φθόνοι, καὶ φόνοι καὶ μάλιστά γε τὸ τοιοῦτον ἐπιχωριάζει κακὸν, ὥστε μηδαμοῦ τοιαύτην ἑτοιμότητα εἶναι πρὸς τὸ φονεύειν, ὅσον ἐν τοῖς τόποις ἐκείνοις, θηρίων δίκην τῷ αἵματι τῶν ὁμοφύλων ἐπιτρεχόντων ἀλλήλων ψυχροῦ κέρδους χάριν.—Greg. Nys. tom. ii. page 1086.

foresaw, to be brought against himself, on the ground of his own visit to Jerusalem, being such as it is, he acknowledges that he had derived *one* advantage at least from his journey, which was this, that, by the comparison of the Holy Land with his own country, he had learned to think of the latter as the holier of the two. It is in this temper that good Catholics return from a visit to Rome.

It was amid the hubbub and profligacy of the 'Holy City,' such as it had become in consequence of the perpetual influx of pilgrims, and their attendants — their valets, guards, retainers, that the clergy kept alive the traffic of the town by cherishing the infatuation of christendom, concerning the 'True Cross,' and the other relics of the Passion. Even if this cross had been so obtained as might possibly have brought the instance within the range of an apology, on the ground of mere delusion or folly, the superstitions therewith connected could not have consisted with the simplicity and spirituality of christian worship; and how could the trade in the genuine chips of a never-diminished cross have consisted with any degree of christian integrity? But these superstitions, and this traffic, were in fact all of a piece with the 'Invention' itself, and with the blasphemous trick by which the pretended discrimination of the Lord's cross was effected!

All was an abominable machination, which could have been successful only in an age of intellectual degeneracy, and could have been hatched by ministers of religion, only when these had long learned to hold in contempt the restraints of religious fear.

Not merely are the facts assumed in the invention utterly incredible in themselves;—but the spot chosen (chosen no doubt because it was in actual occupation of the church, or under its control), is demonstrably not that of the Crucifixion and Sepulchre: it was within the limits of the city, and *far* within the space densely occupied by the suburban town.

We have then before us a train of inferential queries not very loosely connected.—

If the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was included within the walls of the ancient city—then, the 'Invention' of the Cross comes to nothing; and if the cross produced by Macarius at the demand of Helena was not the cross of Golgotha, then

the miracles wrought in attestation of its genuineness, and the perpetual miracle of its multiplication, and the innumerable miracles wrought by the chips, and the nails, and the 'holy thorns,' come to nothing:—and if these be all 'lying wonders,' originated and kept a-going by knaves, then the christian reputation of the bishops and clergy who were therein concerned, and the 'authority' of the church and era of which these fooleries and frauds were the broad characteristics are all reduced to very little; and if so—what becomes of the scheme to restore that authority, and to return to its delusions?

RELICS OF ST. STEPHEN, PROTO-MARTYR.

To secure the inference we have in view from colourable exceptions on every side, I now bring forward a mass of facts which, differing materially from the preceding as to their bearing upon the reputation of the parties concerned, yet force us upon a dilemma conclusive as to the controversy in hand. We still keep in view however the historical conditions already mentioned, and confine ourselves to instances marked by the characteristics of—

COPIOUSNESS, both in the particulars, and in the evidence:

CONTINUITY; or extension through some considerable portion of time:

PUBLICITY; or notoriousness; and

AUTHENTICATION; or a deliberate and reiterated approval on the part of constituted authorities, or persons of the highest repute in the Church.

Now, in dealing with what is before us, I hold myself excused altogether from the task of proving that the instances alleged were not really of a miraculous kind. Fully persuaded as I am that the finger of God was not herein manifested, and that the cases are all referable to a very different kind of agency, I yet leave this point with the reader to determine, as he shall see reason;—only insisting upon the alternative which they offer to us, and to which I ask strict attention.—

The long series of alleged miracles now to be reported were not merely *in their abstract tendency* such as to promote among the

people the habit of relying upon the aid of subordinate divinities, and of rushing to their shrines for aid in times of trouble; *but in fact this was the direct consequence* which thence resulted; and, vouched for as they were by the most eminent persons of the Nicene era, their effect has been to fix upon the christianity of un-reformed Europe a polytheistic practice, admitted by all who now witness it, to involve what is essentially idolatrous.

Against this polytheism and idolatry the Reformed Churches, and not last, the Church of England, vehemently protest.—It is of their very essence to protest against these blasphemous superstitions.

But now, if the alleged miracles which at first sustained these practices were real miracles, in the same sense as those recorded in the Gospels, then the Reformed Churches have been, and are, fighting against God; and nothing remains for them but a penitent abjuration of their infidelity.

But if these miracles (to whatever agency attributable) were not 'of God;' and if they proceeded, whether more or less directly, from 'the father of lies,' then such inferences as these unquestionably follow—

That the Church of the fourth century, far from enjoying the extraordinary guidance of the Holy Spirit, or walking in the path of christian simplicity and godly integrity, was abandoned to the most pernicious infatuations, and was 'turned unto fables,' and had already travelled far upon that road which led it, where we find the Church in the middle ages—deep sunk in the swamp of doctrinal, ethical, and ecclesiastical corruption.

Our final inference then is, That a flagrant inconsistency—to use the gentlest phrase—attaches to the conduct of those who, while by the solemn, reiterated, and unexceptive approbation which they have expressed of the Nicene church, and of its chiefs, they tacitly accept as truly miraculous the alleged miracles of that Church, yet hold office and emolument as ministers of a Church which, IF THOSE MIRACLES WERE REAL, is schismatical, heretical, and antichristian!

The evidence to which we have now to appeal is copious enough to fill half a volume.—I shall use compression, and the learned reader may readily collate my abridged report of the

facts, with the original testimonies, which are found in the places mentioned beneath.*

I should premise the profession of my sincere belief, that the facts are of a kind susceptible of explanation consistently with the christian reputation of Augustine. In these instances, as in many others, he was the dupe of his own credulity, not the machinator of fraud. Intending, as I do, to employ the evidence now to be considered in an urgent manner, and scorning to catch my reader in a trap, it behoves me to state the case as it stands.—

All the principal facts we derive from the undoubted writings of the bishop of Hippo, who reports or refers to them on various occasions. We then turn to certain documents of less authority. But now I will first suppose that these supplementary pieces are, what they profess to be, of contemporary date. In this case the proof is complete, That the practices so fervently recommended by Augustine and his compeers, did, even in his own time, and under his personal observation, produce the very idolatry or polytheism which is now prevalent in the Romish church. If so, what is the drift of the Tracts for the Times, and whither would the writers lead us, in so earnestly labouring to restore the Nicene authority?

Let us however assume that the writings now to be cited in continuation of the evidence drawn from Augustine, are, or that some of them are, of a later age;—let us suppose, the sixth or seventh century. In this case, I appeal to the conscience of the reader—I appeal to the honour and conscience of clergymen, to say whether the practices and notions held forth in these compositions, exhibit any thing else than the natural and inevitable consequences of the doctrine taught, and the worship encouraged, by the Nicene bishops? — But if indeed the later writings are connected with the earlier, by the continuity of direct causation, then we arrive at the same conclusive inference—namely, that the scheme which has been slowly developed in the Tracts for the Times, involves the gradual restoration of polytheism and idolatry.

The restorers of antiquity may elude these conclusions; but they will never fairly escape from them.

* See Supplement.

In the *genuine* history of the first martyrdom, we are told that 'devout men carried Stephen to his burial;' and we naturally suppose that the interment, under the circumstances, took place near to the spot, or not far from Jerusalem. Not so, according to the history of the invention of his relics, which affirms that the body was carried a distance of twenty miles, by the order of Gamaliel!

In what follows let the reader especially mark the *quality of the narrative*, which is a point material to the argument, inasmuch as we find the whole vouched for by a long series of miracles, solemnly attested as true by Augustine, and others.

In the year 415, on Friday the third of December, about nine o'clock in the evening, Lucian, a priest of the church at a place called Carphagamala, was in his bed, in the baptistry, where he guarded the vessels of the church. Between sleeping and waking, or—quasi in extasi effectus, semivigilans, he saw on his right hand an aged man, of sacerdotal aspect, with a long white beard, in a white stole, embroidered with golden crosses, and carrying a golden rod in his hand. This venerable apparition, challenging Lucian thrice by his name, commanded him to admonish John, then bishop of Jerusalem, to make search for, and to bring to light, certain sacred remains, which had long lain in obscurity, and the discovery of which was peculiarly needed by the perils and disorders of the times; so that through them, 'the door of mercy might be opened to many.' 'It is not,' said the apparition, 'so much on my own account, as on that of those interred with me, and who are worthy of many honours, that I am thus anxious for the discovery of the relics.'

'Who art thou, Sir?' said Lucian. 'I am Gamaliel,' replied the vision; 'the same who taught Paul the Apostle. He who is buried with me is—Dominus meus Stephanus, who was stoned by the Jews and chief priests, at Jerusalem, for the faith of Christ. The body, after it had lain exposed a day and a night, untouched by beast or bird, I directed to be removed by religious men, and carried to this place, where I caused a mourning to be made for him, forty days, and where, at my own charges, he was interred. Moreover Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night, is buried in the same sepulchre; he having been deprived of his rank by the

Jews, was nourished by me to the end of his days, and buried honourably by me, next to my master Stephen; where also I interred my dear son Abibas.'

Lucian entreated that, if this were a true vision, it might be repeated once and again; which in fact happened:—Gamaliel, appearing after an interval, reproached the priest for his tardiness in declaring the matter to his bishop:—Lucian pleaded in excuse his fear of being regarded as an impostor, or visionary. In condescension to this fear, the venerable ghost produced four baskets; three golden, and one of silver:—the three filled with roses, white and red; the fourth with odoriferous saffron!—signifying the relics, severally, of those who shared the same sepulchre:—to wit, Stephen, Nicodemus, Abibas, and Gamaliel's self! At the third time of this appearance, the slighted Rabbi thus upbraided the *incredulous* priest—Quam excusationem habebis apud Deum, aut quam veniam pro hoc comtemptu sperabis in die judicii? 'Go—go—tell the bishop to open to us, and to construct a place of prayer—THAT BY OUR INTERCESSION, THE LORD MAY HAVE MERCY UPON HIS PEOPLE.'

After a further vision, the scrupulous Lucian posted to Jerusalem, where he narrated all to the bishop, who wept for joy in receiving such tidings, and commanded Lucian to return, and make search for the sacred treasure; and if he found it, to report accordingly.—The search was made, the inhabitants of the village having been summoned by the town-crier to attend at break of day, and assist in the exhumation. The search, at first fruitless, was at length made under direction of 'a simple-minded man,' who, during the night, had also been favoured with a visit from Gamaliel:—and success crowned the renewed diligence of priests and people.—Three coffins were found, duly inscribed in mystic style! The news is carried to the bishop, who was then presiding at a synod at Lydda: he hastens to the spot, with two of his colleagues, and proceeded to open the coffin of Stephen; and at the instant there was an earthquake! and moreover a sweet odour was suffused all around, such as none had ever before heard of, or perceived! 'Verily,' says the narrator, 'we believed ourselves surrounded with the delights of Paradise!' Among the crowd then present, were many labouring under various disorders (some

of which are enumerated) and in that same hour, and by the sweetness of that odour, seventy and three souls were cured! From some, demons were expelled!—After leaving, on the spot—de membris sancti parvos articulos, the relics, with earth, were conveyed to the Holy Church of Sion.

The invention happened at the time of a great drought; but at the very moment of their discovery a heavy rain fell, 'and the earth was satisfied! and all gave glory to the Lord for his holy Stephen, and for the heavenly treasure of mercy and piety which, at a time of public danger, had been granted to the Church.'

So much for the history of the 'Revelation of the Body of St. Stephen,' in which two significant circumstances will have been remarked—That this discovery was to subserve the purpose of refreshing the pilgrimage-fervour of the christian world, by opening a new 'throne of grace,' to all men—even the shrine of the Proto-martyr; and then, That the 'revelation' had relation to some peril or controversy of the moment, in the same way that the 'invention' of the Milanese martyrs was a seasonable occurrence. Now the writer whom we have been following affirms—and his incidental reference to this fact is a good evidence of the genuineness of the document—that, at the time of the invention of the relics, bishop John of Jerusalem was presiding at a synod at Diospolis (Lydda). The acts or minutes of this council are extant (Acta Concil. I. 1207), it had relation to Pelagius, who was then in Palestine, and to the conduct of Augustine toward him; and the coincidence may well suggest some surmises, when we find this honest, but too eager controvertist, *adopting* the relics of St. Stephen with so much zeal, thus giving his high sanction to the proceedings of his Jerusalem brother.

Omitting some apocryphal pieces, connected with these relics, our next document is that—de Miraculis Stephani, in two books. Whether they be the very books mentioned and cited by Augustine, or not, we need not stay to inquire:—let them be of an earlier, or of a later age, they exhibit, in detail, what this worship of the saints, with its abundant miracles, was; and then, in afterwards citing Augustine, we have only to inquire whether the popular practices in this behalf were, or were not, the natural and proper consequences of the doctrine taught, and the worship

instituted by him, and his distinguished colleagues. If so, and if the miracles be real, then Protestantism is condemned;—or if the miracles be spurious, and the worship polytheistic, then THE CHURCH OF THE FOURTH CENTURY IS CONDEMNED, along with the church of Rome.

The author of the 'Libri duo,' characteristically cites the Angel Raphael (Tobit xii. 7) in recommendation of the task he undertakes, the intention of which is to make manifest the divine power, as displayed in the miracles effected—per Patronum nostrum Stephanum, primum martyrum, et amicum Dei. He disclaims all endeavours to charm the ear by beauty of style—content as he is to narrate *facts* in the plainest terms, so that—ipsa nostra narratio, non tam verborum pompam audeat quærere, sed potius mendaciorum fucum studeat declinare. Nor let it be imagined, says he, that the writer assumes to add any thing to the glory of the blessed martyr—quando quidem illi nec tacendo demere, nec loquendo quidquam possumus conferre.—A fit style truly, when the innate glories of a divinity are in question! The immortal gods may well contemn that poor fame which it is in the power of mortals to give or to deny!

In all cases of the importation of holy relics, a vision—as an anticipative invoice, announces the coming of the sacred treasure;—nor was such a precursive 'revelation' wanting in this instance. But we must advance into the midst of this narrative, leaving the ancillæ, and their dreams and prognostics, to a time of more leisure, merely mentioning the fact, that some of the relics of St. Stephen had reached the North African church.

A small portion of the sacred remains, borne in his bosom by the bishop, attended by his clergy, and a countless multitude of people, was conveyed to the place of their rest, and which was to become a 'throne of mercy,' in the church. On the road, the multitude chants the words—'Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord!' Such was the christian style of these times! The very evening of the day in which the relics were placed upon a covered throne, in the chancel or quire, a certain woman, named Hilara, blind, or affected in the eyes, but confiding in the power of the Martyr, caused herself to be led to the shrine, where she rubbed her eyes with the pall, covering the relics, and went away,

not seeing as yet, but firm in hope (let the phrases be well noted) —jam luce fidei irradiata discessit. Nam gloriosi martyris nomen *nunc ore, nunc corde precando*, etiam Christum Dominum non reticebat. An incredulous son, it appears, accused his mother, when she began to proclaim her cure—of having heretofore *feigned herself blind!* Nec mirum, exclaims the writer, si animalis homo nondum perciperet quæ sunt Spiritus Dei! She, good woman (who best knew whether she had been blind or not) when actually she beheld the light of day—Amico Christi (for such was the martyr's common appellation) gracias agebat; and repairing to church, laudes Dei et amici Dei, non abscondit! The writer concludes—Hoc ergo primum notum est apud nos in adventu sanctarum reliquiarum.

S S. P. et G. as we remember, commenced their healing practice at Milan, with a blind butcher—the Sanctæ Reliquiæ of St. Stephen, with a confectioner; and the next to come on the magic screen is—a barber! and his name is Concordius. He had broken his leg by a fall. Downcast with the thought of a family in want, his troubled sleep was enlivened by a vision of an old woman—to wit—'the Church,' who enjoined him to have recourse to St. Stephen—'and he will heal thee.' To the shrine of the martyr went —in vision, the Aged Lady, and the Barber;—she interceding with this intercessor that he might intercede with the one Intercessor, and so at last that the poor man might be restored! Thus pleads the Old Lady with the Martyr—Rogo te *per sanctitatem tuam*, cura illum:—which, if it were rendered into the vernacular of the sister island, we protestants should be ready to cite as a flagrant instance of popish idolatry.—'I beseech thee, (St. Stephen) *by thy holiness*, cure the man—have pity upon him! have pity upon his children—free an innocent person from affliction!' The poor barber then sees the Patron-Martyr approaching his couch, in shining raiment, to whom he addresses, with tears, his own humble prayer: 'Dear Friend of Christ, heal me—free me from tribulation — have pity upon me — have pity upon my children!' Scarcely had the petitioner finished these words when—PRECUM AUDITOR (namely, the martyr Stephen) precibus respondebat, dicens, Surge, salvus factus es:—'the HEARER OF PRAYER replied to these prayers, and said—Arise, thou art made whole.'—All

this had passed in his sleep; but at this moment, up jumps the barber from his couch, almost perfectly restored! and forthwith, or at break of day, he hastens to make his votive offerings at the martyr's shrine; arriving at the church, gloriam Dei, atque Amici Dei sanitatis attestatione prædicavit. From that time forward 'innumerable miracles' were daily wrought at the shrine, which thus became a sort of dispensary to the country, far and near. The writer declares his inability to recount the instances in which the sick were healed, *and the dead raised!*

We may remark, by the way, that these affirmations, large as they are, do not surpass those advanced by Gregory Nyssen, on a similar occasion, and which have been already cited in these numbers.

How various were the benefits accruing to a happy people from the possession of holy relics, in those times of christian simplicity, let the following instance show. A woman, whose husband had been absent nearly three years, uncertain whether he was living or dead, and whose affections wavered between contending purposes, sometimes inclining her to the better, and sometimes toward a less worthy course—tandem inter hujuscemodi sibimet repugnantium cogitationum æstus, she is advised by her neighbours—not without a divine providence, to have recourse to the aid of the most potent advocate Stephen!—potentissimi advocati Stephani implorare patrocinia. She flew to his oratory, or shrine —supplex advolavit, ibique se cum lacrymis stravit; and while she prayed, an answer is vouchsafed: dum orat, audire meruit.— 'Thy husband comes!' She hastens home, and she finds him there, safe and sound! How well does the writer conclude his account of this edifying instance—Ita et conjugi castitas custodita, et Amico Dei quanta fuerit animæ periclitantis *cura*, cognitum factum est in Dei mirabili gratia.

Is any justice shown to the modern church of Rome, when we condemn its popular practice of praying to the saints as idolatrous; and in the same breath approve the practices of the Nicene church? Those who are now doing so must be understood as assenting to the miracles by which this worship was accredited. Why they should withhold their credence from the *Romish* miracles, better attested, does not appear.

About the same time, says our narrator, a man of our town, named Dativus, happened to be buried under the ruins of his house. He was dug out—dead, and the funeral rites were in progress; but his wife, in the agony of her grief, rushed to the shrine—GLORIOSI STEPHANI, there, with tears, to prostrate herself in prayer for the life of her husband! After she had knocked for some time in faith at the ears of the Friend of God—ad aures Amici Dei, fide pulsaret, and persevered in prayer; behold, suddenly, and in the view of the spectators of the funeral, and of those who were invoking the name of the martyr, her husband—on the bier where he lay, began to open his eyes, and to move; and some hours afterwards, he was once more numbered with the living! Thus restored, he was able to reveal the secrets of the invisible world, in which he had been a sojourner. He told how he had found himself surrounded with a multitude of the dead, of whom he recognised some, and some not:—at length there came forward a Youth in a shining vest; but habited as a Deacon (what could be more natural?) and who spoke to the crowd of ghosts in a tone of authority, saying to them 'Fall back:' and they disappear! The dead man was then commanded by this Deacon (St. Stephen) to repeat the Creed and the Lord's Prayer; which done, signing him with the sign of the cross, he said to him 'Arise; thou art restored.'

The venerable bishop under whose wing these wonders were occurring, had made preparations for the removal of a certain portion of the relics to another church in his diocese; and the day was fixed for the ceremony. But in the interim, two of his presbyters received an admonition from the martyr, to the intent that this should not be done. It was however notwithstanding attempted; but was prevented by a tumultuous onset of the people, who, 'inflamed with the zeal of faith, and the love of the Friend of God,' compelled the bishop to swear that he would relinquish his intention. This incident deserves notice as affording proof of the hold which this demonolatry had obtained over the mass of the people:—it was (as it is now in Roman Catholic countries) *the religion* of the people. The very day on which the parted relics were replaced, and while, with acclamations, hymns, and sweet harmonies, the vast crowd was proceeding to reintegrate their sundered god, a blind man, full of faith, 'took the

kingdom of heaven by force, and laying hands upon the silver coffer containing the aforesaid portion of the martyr—received his sight—quia qui vim faciunt, diripiunt illud.

In the common jail two prisoners were bound with chains. One of them writhing with pain, invoked to his succour St. Stephen, Beloved of Christ! when lo! in the midst of his tears and prayers, the chains suddenly fall from his hands! The gaoler trembles to think of binding him anew; but lest his fellow should also be freed, tightens his bonds—ignorans quia sermo Dei non est alligatus. Galled by this new severity, the poor man betakes himself to the same potent friend—ipse quoque exaudiri meruit, and he also is released! Another prisoner, while in the warm bath, being tormented by the swelling of his limbs within his chains, had faith 'to implore the aid of the Friend of God;' and with the like happy success, and all who witnessed the fact glorified Christ, and his first Confessor!

All trades took their turns in these favours.—A paralytic blacksmith, hearing the fame of the blessed Stephen, indicated to his parents—for he could not speak, his desire to be carried to the shrine of the glorious martyr. Many months did he wait for his cure—prostrate on the cold marble; but at length the Martyr appeared to him—gave him a promise that he should be healed on a certain day, at the end of four months, which was fulfilled—sicut et nostra conscientia testis est, et ipse in gloriam Dei confessus est.

It was at Uzali, and in and about Hippo and Utica, that these miracles occurred. At the latter place the mother of a paralytic man, in the full assurance of faith, hurried to the shrine of the holy Stephen; and having commended the case of her son—OPTIMO ADVOCATO (St. Stephen) she took away with her some of the dust, which she applied to her son, and which effected his immediate cure, so that he forthwith repaired on foot to the shrine, there to return his grateful acknowledgments to his benefactor; that is to say, when he should have recovered also the use of his tongue. This however followed a repeated application to his lips of a garment that had touched the coffer. A blind man came to the station of 'the most potent physician Stephen'—and there knocking in the piety of faith, received a cure; in acknowledg-

ment of which he presented to the holy martyr a silver candle :—fit expression of the benefit conferred !

Nor did the Saint disdain to render aid to his votaries on the humblest occasions of common life.—Mark an instance. A man had sent his son and his servant, with a sum of money, to purchase pigs at a considerable distance.—They returned not at the time expected ; and the father is upbraided by his neighbours, for having exposed his son and servant to the perils of so long a journey. Sad thoughts of robbers oppressed him ; and 'tears were his meat through the day.' At night, however, in a vision, a bright form appears to him, and brings him comfort—' I am Stephen,' said the fair apparition : ' thy son and servant have their faces turned homewards, driving before them four-and-forty pigs, and all of them choice ones'—omnes electos ! The happy prognostic is realized in all its details, and at the predicted hour —in comes the lad—the servant—the four-and-forty ' choice pigs,' and a credit in cash to boot !

Our next instance is still more remarkable than this, and carries with it several inferences. A certain woman had lost her son, who was yet a catechumen, and unbaptized. Distracted with this double grief, she laid the corpse before the glorious Stephen, that, *from him*, she might receive her son alive. Having assailed the ears of the Friend of God in pious confidence ; and in the agonizing thought that her offspring had died to perish eternally—utpote sine gratia baptismi, salvum habere non posset, her sorrow is regarded—her son is restored to life, and again moves and speaks. A priest is instantly called—holy baptism is administered, and the soul, thus liberated from the bonds of mortal sin, expires and returns to God !

The writer, in concluding his First Book, informs us that he had selected a few from among innumerable instances of the miraculous interpositions of the most glorious Stephen. We may therefore assume it as certain, that he had chosen those which he considered the least questionable in themselves, and which, altogether, were best adapted to inflame the pious confidence of the martyr's votaries. We moreover learn that this selection had been put together in preparation for the Festival of the Saint, when it was to be read in the hearing of a vast multitude, congregated

from the regions, far and near. In a word, this narrative was intended to promote, throughout the North African churches, the practice of resorting for succour to the lately established shrine of St. Stephen at Uzali.

The exordium of the Second Book, in which the writer addresses his sanctity, the bishop, with the most holy, the fathers and brethren, is remarkable. We thence gather (it is too long to cite) that the miracles, mighty works and acts of the Lord Stephen, the first martyr of Christ, having been publicly recited at his festival, with the plaudits of the multitude, the very persons who had been healed, or raised from the dead, or otherwise benefited by the divinity; or at least as many of them as were then forthcoming, were produced in attestation of the facts affirmed, so that the scripture was fulfilled—'As we have *heard*, so have we *seen*:' and how heavenly was the spectacle! For when the reader had finished a narrative, as to wit, that of the blind man restored to sight, the very man is hunted for in the crowd—he is found—he is produced before all; who look upon him with wonder and gratulation:—and so again with the paralytic, and others. And amid these demonstrations of the power and grace of the saint, when the eye testified to the ear, who was there so stern and iron-hearted as not to be dissolved in tears; or not to be softened to piety and humility? Loud acclamations followed the reading of each article of the narrative:—still louder burst forth when the very person is produced; and every human heart glows with the fires of divine love!

In addressing himself to the second part of his task, the writer solemnly appeals to heaven, and it is well to listen to his professions.—

Referam igitur vobis, Carissimi, adjutorio Domini nostri Jesu Christi, adhuc STEPHANI PATRONI COMMUNIS mirabilia gestæ rei multisque bene notissimam in laudem et gloriam Dei memorabilem historiam.—

The particulars of his first instance I take the liberty to omit:—in brief, a christian mother, in behalf of a much afflicted daughter, had come from Carthage to Uzali, to obtain the succour of the Lord Stephen, the Friend of God. What follows the reader shall judge of for himself:—our question is—Whether the

saint-worship of the Nicene church materially differed, or differed in its religious tendency, from that of the modern church of Rome—this worship having been formally and solemnly sanctioned by the principal persons of the Nicene age, and attested by innumerable miracles (alleged), and even by *many* resurrections from the dead!

Dici non potest quibus illa pia femina AMICUM Dei flebilibus vocibus fuerit aggressa, et quanta cum miseratione ante limina GLORIOSI MARTYRIS prostrata, effusos sui cordis dolores expresserit, in hæc verba prorumpens.—

Let me interrupt this christian lady at her devotions, just to remind the reader that, while the revivers of catholic practices express their disapproval of the *popish* invocation of saints, they tell us *they see nothing* in the practices of *the first six centuries*, which should offend those who have subscribed the twenty-second of the Thirty-nine Articles!—But our primitive Carthaginian *catholic* lady shall speak for herself, and for her times, and for her admirers of the present day. Thus then she prays—

DOMINE STEPHANE, Christi amice, subveni matri miseræ, AD TE CONFUGIENTI pro salute periclitantis filiæ! Hic TE ergo planctibus ORO, illic TE ancilla tua, præsentem medicum sentiat IMPLORO. Scis ipse qualibus caussis laboret Megetia (the daughter) et in quo vitæ discrimine sit constituta.

. . . Ego quæ ad Christum et te Amicum ejus confugi, credo quia talis luctus de filia non imponetur capiti meo. Peto autem et rogo, ut cum hinc a corona tua (the throne or shrine) revertens festinanter ad ancillam tuam proficisci cœpero, recreetur anima mea de filia aliquo nuntio bono.

The lady did not fail to bear with her some holy oil and a napkin (orarium) to apply to her daughter; and who can doubt what was the happy issue? Life was prolonged. A further act of mercy was however needed; and the christian mother and daughter repair together to the oratory of the 'Friend of God;' and thus does the mother propitiate his favour—pleading the hostile incredulity of the father, who was yet a pagan, as a reason why the favour solicited should be granted.

Domine Stephane, ecce adduxi Megetiam tuam ad te, quam TU IPSE *liberasti de morte*. . . . . Fac, rogo, fac iterum erubescere

os (qui detrahunt et desperant de Christo) de tota et de plena Megetiæ tuæ salute, sicut jam fecisti erubescere eos de ejus uteri periculosissimo labore. Non omnino deficies ad minora, qui præstitisti majora .... Non confundatur mater in filia, *quæ presumpsit* IN TE, *quæ confugit* AD TE.....

The young lady, whose disorder was an unsightly affection of the face—resolute in her endeavours to obtain a cure, actually thrust her head within the enclosure of the shrine, so as to bathe the sacred coffer with her tears.—While doing so, she felt the hand of the martyr stroking her face:—ecce ILLO DESUPER MISERANTE qui appropinquat contritis corde! This narrative, which occupies five closely printed folio columns, includes two or three bright appearances of the 'Young Deacon'—the Friend of God, and Potent Physician, to these ladies!

Strange that it should have become necessary to drag from their fit obscurity, the revolting inanities of this pernicious superstition! To be compelled to spend hours upon such materials, is indeed a humiliation. But we must do our part.

A wine-merchant discovers, to his dismay, that two hundred casks of his best wine—his entire vintage, have gone sick in a desperate manner:—quis tunc ibidem fuerit possessoris animus, quis ipsius apothecarii luctus puto quod ignorare non possit omnis compatiens animus humanus! The liquor could not be sold, even for vinegar. But relief was at hand—the desponding proprietor, by a divine instigation, resolves to have recourse—ad Amicum Dei Stephanum Sanctum, primum martyrum Christi! Nor was he left to be ashamed of his hope!—The wine is restored, and the writer becomes eloquent in describing the happy change—nitor in colore conspicitur, sapor in gustu approbatur, tristitia in gaudium commutatur, et quid quantumque fides in Christo, ejusque Gloriosissimo Amico valeat reperitur!....

Surely we ought to admire the skill and discretion of the compiler of this narrative of wonders, who, in his selection of instances, contrives to meet the wants and woes of all conditions of men, and to open to every rank and every profession—a door of hope in the time of trouble!

On a certain day, says the writer, during the market hours, in our town, the heavens were suddenly overcast, and there appeared

immediately above us, a fiery serpent of immense magnitude:—an occurrence which the writer thinks consonant with certain Scriptures, which he cites. It was no wonder that, while this monster continued to contort his sparkling length, as if in preparation for a descent upon the devoted town, terror should reign beneath, or that a general *sauve qui peut* should drive the people to make their escape in all directions! The stalls are deserted—business comes to an end, and many of the people rush to the bosom of mother church—ad gremium ecclesiæ matris, for safety.

Now let us observe the style of the times, thoroughly heathenish as it is; one set of names having been substituted for another. The people, in the first instance, we are told, betake themselves to the mercy of God the Father:—and then, ad ipsam AMICI DEI sacratam memoriam in facie prostrata jacebat diversa ætas, dispar quoque sexus. To the sacred oratory of the FRIEND OF GOD they also go, and there the old and the young—men and women, lie prostrate! Prayer was however offered to Christ—the Christ of THE LORD STEPHEN—ad Christum Domini Stephani. Forthwith the said monster curled up his horrid length among the retiring clouds, and the people once more were glad, and returned abundant thanks, as in duty bound—Deo et AMICO EJUS!

But this is not the end of the story.—To a subdeacon of the church was delivered, by a mysterious stranger, a vail on which was an emblematic painting in many colours, indicating to the grateful people of Uzali the celestial *rationale* of their late deliverance from the aerial dragon; and in doing so, their devotion to their illustrious patron was confirmed. This pictured vail was hung up before the shrine—TANTI PATRONI! It represented St. Stephen triumphing over the monster, whom he crushed with his foot! It was, says the writer, as if God, by this picture, were holding converse with the people, and showing them *to whose intercession* they were indebted for their deliverance from so terrible a danger. Wherefore—such is the import of the pictorial admonition—Deo vestro, per AMICUM MEUM, gratias agite. . . . .

The writer having, as he thinks, by this time adduced instances enough of the healing and saving powers of the LORD STEPHEN—the patron of the people, he proceeds to an example of another kind:—and it is an instance demonstrating, if further proof were

needed, what was the real drift of all these wonders, and showing too the way in which they were managed, and how the strings were pulled.—

A certain functionary in the fiscal department, at Carthage, had incurred the high displeasure of his superior, before whom he stood trembling in expectation of some merciless infliction, even to the forfeiture of his life. The by-standers gaze upon him in pity and terror; or glance at the menacing visage of his infuriated principal! In this moment of suspense the trembling man receives a touch on the shoulder from an executioner in attendance, who whispers to him this timely advice—'Invoca S. Stephanum . . . !' The friendly hint was thankfully received—and the already comforted Florentius—that was his name—ceased not inwardly to pray to, and invoke THE GLORIOUS STEPHEN. At length, raising his eyes toward his judge, he sees, instead of his vindictive master, whose stern features, deformed by age, were wont to inspire disgust, a bright and youthful form! It was none other than THE GLORIOUS STEPHEN, whom he recognised as thus personally present to his aid, and as presiding in the place of his austere judge. —Quid multa? The judge softens—the spectators are amazed; and Florentius is restored within a few seconds to the favour of the proconsul!

The Glorious Martyr, not willing to forego the grateful acknowledgments of his client, appears to him in a vision of the night, and the next day Florentius hastens to the oratory. But, ignorant of the road, he prayed for guidance from the same potent and gracious being; nor was even this suit denied;—he reaches the church at Uzali, and there—beati martyris limina *humili pietate* ingressus, et *pavimento prostratus*, omnipotento Domino Jesu Christo, ejusque BEATISSIMO AMICO, gratias egit!

Such is that 'invocation of saints, and veneration of relics,' which, according to the new interpretation of her formularies, the Church of England allows, or does not forbid, and which its conscientious members may themselves practise without blame or inconsistency! The instances we have had before us come not, we are told, under the censure that is attached to *popish* superstitions, and to *Romish* doctrines. On the contrary, fully sanctioned as they are by 'catholic antiquity,' and universally prevalent

as they were long before the expiration of the period the decisions of which are authoritative, we should reverently walk in the same path, and look to the same benign powers for the same benefits!

Whether or not the Two Books above cited be genuine, which there is no reason to doubt, the most ample and circumstantial evidence attests the fact that the practices therein described prevailed in all quarters of christendom, during the fourth and fifth centuries. Let it however be supposed, for a moment, that these practices did not become prevalent until a later time—say, the seventh or eighth century.—We have then to inquire whether at all, or in what degree if at all, they were (when they did prevail) the proper consequences of the doctrine taught, and of the worship allowed and promoted, by the Nicene authorities. This is therefore now our question; and let the reader, as we enter upon it, remember the formal and solemn assertion lately advanced by the admirers of antiquity—

—That the *popish* invocation of saints—or such invocation as these divines consider to be reprehensible, *received no sort of encouragement*, or sanction, from the great writers and bishops of the Nicene age. We turn therefore from the 'Two Books,' to the unquestioned writings of Augustine, only premising that he, even while promoting the superstitions of his times, laboured hard, within certain limits, to give them a better direction.—In these instances the little finger of some of his illustrious contemporaries was thicker and heavier than the bishop of Hippo's body.

I cannot allow my inference to be evaded by a substitution of one question for another in this case. We are not asking whether the good Augustine was not a little too credulous; or whether he is to be understood as pledging himself in an explicit manner to the truth of whatever he relates. What we ask is this—

Whether the practice of addressing petitions *in the most direct* manner, to Dead Men (and in the same way, that is allowed by the church of Rome) received, or did not receive, a solemn sanction from the great writers of the Nicene church; and in this case, from Augustine, one of the best of them?

I respectfully protest against any endeavour to elude the point of this present inquiry.

Augustine's manner, in his Festival Sermons, and in the many places where he speaks incidentally of the miracles that were a-going around him, and of the martyr-worship therewith connected, indicates a sincere conviction of the reality of what he was recommending to the popular belief. He was as true a believer as have been many great and good men of the Romish church—and as were the Port-royalists and Pascal. Nor was *his* credulity, although extreme, an imbecile prurience toward the marvellous, like that of Gregory of Tours; nor was it a blind acceptance of every legend, like Bede's. It was that fervid sensitiveness toward whatever seems to connect humanity with a spiritual system, which has been the characteristic of some of the most powerful minds:—and on *this* ground we might name in company, Augustine, Martin Luther, and John Wesley. A very different feeling was that of Ambrose, in narrating the circumstances of the invention of the relics of the Milanese divinities. The politic bishop of Milan *knew well what he was about*, while promoting the worship of the martyrs:—the bishop of Hippo found this worship the firmly-established usage of the catholic world; and as it was questioned by schismatics, and ridiculed by the heterodox, or by atheists, it was to himself the more strongly recommended as true and good. He dared not ask whence it had come; or inquire whither it was carrying the church; and while his spiritual tastes made him sometimes revolt from the enormities therewith connected, and which were passing daily under his eye, he believed that these evils, flagrant as they were, needed or admitted no other correction than the mild cautions and remonstrances which he seizes every occasion to suggest.

To have collected Augustine's evidence in this instance, without saying what we have said to screen his reputation, would be ungenerous, and indeed unjust. This done, his voluminous writings furnish incontestable and copious evidence of the melancholy fact—That the church to which we are now referred as our model in doctrine and worship, had reached, at the close of the fourth century, nearly the last and lowest stage of polytheistic infatuation;— and this sustained by the most abominable means which pious knavery has ever imagined.

Of this state of things the 'Libri duo,' above cited, furnish a

sufficient sample. Our part now is to trace these monstrous impieties and frauds, through the unimpeachable and simple-hearted testimony of Augustine, to the CHURCH SYSTEM OF THE NICENE AGE.

Whenever any remarkable miracle had occurred, redounding to the honour of 'a Glorious Martyr,' and tending to promote the credit of his oratory, it was the custom to draw up a Brief, or Certificate—Libellus, under the direction of the bishop. These Briefs, strung together, were then read to the people on, or at a time immediately preceding, the high festival of the Martyr; and the perusal was followed by a turgid oration, in his praise, pronounced by the principal preacher of the church. No small proportion of the orations and sermons which have come down to us from that age, are commemorative harangues of this very kind. Not seldom the preacher was interrupted in his discourse by the exulting clamours of the crowd, or by the sudden appearance of some one who had just been raised from the dead, or miraculously cured by the martyr. In several instances Augustine alludes to such interruptions.—Debet a nobis hesternus Sermo compleri, qui majori interruptus est gaudio. Serm. 324. It is easy to imagine at once the inducements which such scenes of confusion and excitement furnished to the wonder-workers, to do their best; and the facilities they afforded for gulling the credulous multitude. Especially would it be so when the church was governed by either a crafty, or a credulous bishop.

Just as the best modern Romanist divines and preachers have done, so did Augustine in his day—earnestly strive to snatch the people from that abyss of polytheism into which this worship of the saints was plunging them. Sometimes he attempts this by categorical and anxious affirmations of the great truth, that worship is due to God alone—sometimes by insisting upon nice metaphysical distinctions; and sometimes by endeavouring to open the *rationale* of Martyr Power. And all these instances of cautionary explication exhibit an uneasiness, or a half-consciousness of a danger, or an abuse, against which the people were but ill provided.

'Well will it be,' says he, in one of these Festival Sermons (319), 'if ye understand that the holy martyr (Stephen) has

wrought so many miracles in the name of Christ; but never did Christ work a miracle in the name of Stephen. Ye will thus know how to distinguish the servant from the Lord—the worshipper from him who is to be worshipped.' The points of resemblance between the waning paganism, and the christianized polytheism which had taken its place, were too many and too broadly marked to allow the analogy, or rather the *identity*, to be overlooked. The comparison which thence forced itself upon all observant minds, annoyed and perplexed the christian champions; and they laboured to establish distinctions which the common people barely understood, at the moment, and which they utterly forgot when they rushed to the fanes of their new divinities to supplicate favours.

'It might be objected perhaps, says Augustine, by the heathen, that *their* gods have also wrought miracles.—Well, they compare their gods to our Dead Men! Be it so, but the martyrs are not to us as gods: they (the martyrs) and we, acknowledge one and the same God. Nor yet should the miracles wrought in the pagan temples by any means be compared to those which take place at the oratories of our martyrs. The one kind are attributable to the agency of demons; the other to that of the martyrs; or rather, it is God who effects them—they (the martyrs) praying or co-operating, and all for the purpose, not of establishing their own credit as gods; but that we and they together may believe in the same God. Furthermore the heathen build temples to their gods—such as they are, and erect altars, and appoint priests, and perform sacrifices. But we, on the contrary, construct—not temples to our martyrs, as to gods; but oratories, as to Dead Men, whose spirits live with God. Nor do we there erect altars, on which to offer sacrifices to the martyrs; but to the one God—theirs and ours. To whose miracles then should credence be given?—To the miracles of those who would themselves pass for gods—or of those who work wonders to bring men to the belief of the one God?

Had Augustine then read the religious history of the world to so little purpose, as not to learn that it is this very practice of looking to 'Dead Men' as patrons, or helpers, which has, in different eras, seduced mankind from the worship of God?

author of the apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon would have taught him better. And how certainly must this 'spiritual fornication' (Wisdom xiv. 12) ensue when, among a people lately, and but partially reclaimed from paganism, as near a resemblance as was possible to the barely obsolete idolatry has been established, and is promoted by nefarious delusions and tricks!

Well aware, as he was, of the fact that the gods of the heathen were almost all of them Dead Men deified (Civ. Dei, viii. 26), he could yet see the people flocking again to the shrines of 'Dead Men,' believed to possess miraculous powers of healing, and to whom passionate supplications were constantly addressed; — he could see all this, and not see that the slain paganism was reviving with freshened energy! How should not the people abandon themselves to this new polytheism, when a far more ready help was to be obtained at the shrines of the martyrs than had ever been promised at the fanes of the gods, and when, moreover, they were hearing, every day, the superannuated gods and goddesses, through the lips of demoniacs, confessing themselves vanquished and displaced by the martyrs! Sed dolor dæmonum per eum (Hermes) loquebatur, qui suas futuras pœnas apud sanctorum martyrum memorias imminere mærebant. In multis enim talibus locis torquentur et confitentur, et de possessis hominum corporibus ejiciuntur. Civ. Dei, viii. 26.

How does Augustine toil at the task of making good the fine distinction between the old demon worship, and the new! 'Who,' asks he, 'who has ever heard a christian, standing at the shrine of a martyr, say—I offer this sacrifice to thee Peter, or Paul, or Cyprian?' and yet, every day, he saw the people—christianized after a fashion, coming with their votive offerings to the oratories, and there leaving them in grateful acknowledgment of favours received! Already, in some places, the people had carried these analogies—so agreeable to their inveterate habits, to a greater extent—an extent not approved indeed. But let us hear in what style Augustine palliates even such practices. The passage is highly significant, and I ask the reader's strict attention to the bishop's own words.

Quæcumque igitur adhibentur religiosorum obsequia in martyrum locis, ornamenta sunt memoriarum, non sacra vel sacrificia

mortuorum tanquam deorum. Quicumque etiam epulas suas eo deferunt, quod quidem a Christianis melioribus non fit, et in plerisque terrarum nulla talis est consuetudo; tamen quicumque id faciunt, quas cum apposuerint, orant, et auferunt, ut vescantur, vel ex eis etiam indigentibus largiantur, sanctificari sibi eas volunt *per merita* martyrum in nomine Domini martyrum. Non autem esse ista sacrificia martyrum novit, qui novit unum, quod etiam illic offertur sacrificium Christianorum. Civ. Dei, viii. 27.

So closely had the *christianized* heathenism of the shrines and oratories followed upon the *heathen* heathenism of the parentalia, that Augustine, in this and other passages, found all his ingenuity demanded to make out a clear case of exculpation for the Church, when he had to do with its opponents. In the above passage he denies that the custom of offering viands at the shrines of the martyrs was general in christendom; it had however so firmly established itself in North Africa that (in a letter which has been already cited) he expresses his belief that nothing less than the authority of a general council could avail to repress the evils thence accruing. Moreover we find Basil of Cappadocia, in his tract against Luxury and Drunkenness, contending, some years earlier, with the disorders which had sprung from the very same custom. Nor is this all, for, by Augustine's own testimony (Confess. VI. 2,) it appears to have prevailed in Italy also, and to have been prohibited at Milan by Ambrose. His devout mother (Augustine's) was, he says, so passionately addicted to the practice of bringing pottage, bread, and wine, to the shrines—sicut in Africa solebat, that, in her son's opinion, no influence or authority less powerful than that of Ambrose, would ever have weaned her from the custom. And yet this same custom, which 'the better sort of christians did not use,' or which they had ceased to use, is reproved by Jerome, by Basil, by Chrysostom, and by Augustine himself, rather on account of the revelry and licentiousness therewith connected, than because it offended, in their view, any christian sentiment; and these usages are only incidentally objected to—quia illa quasi parentalia superstitioni gentilium essent simillima.

'Our martyrs might well be called heroes,' says Augustine, (Civ. Dei, x. 21,) 'if ecclesiastical usage permitted the adoption

of the phrase.' But although it did not, they—the martyrs, not merely inherited the prerogatives of the hero gods, but were the objects of a far more animated worship, and exercised powers which touched the hopes and fears of mankind far more intimately and extensively. This is an important point in the comparison between the gay, sensual, picturesque, and poetic idolatry of ancient Greece and Rome; and the profound, heart-stirring polytheism which, under the guise of christian names, superseded it. Under the superannuated dispensation of Jupiter, Ceres, Æsculapius, and the rest, a fond mother approaches the shrine of the goddess Febris, and supplicates the divinity for the restoration of her sick son: he recovers, and she at once acquits and obliterates her gratitude in the votive inscription—

'Divinæ Febri, sanctæ Febri, magnæ Febri Camilla amata pro filio male affecto.'

But how deeply were the very same maternal affections set to work under the christianized polytheism of the Nicene church!—Let us take an instance, at hand, and connected with our immediate subject—the miraculous powers of the proto-martyr. From the Libri duo I have cited the case of a mother praying to St. Stephen for the *resurrection* of her unbaptized infant. We now turn to Augustine, and take his undoubted account of the same (it is manifestly the same) transaction.

What he had to mention had taken place, says the bishop of Hippo, at Uzali, of which place his brother (brother *bishop*) Evodius was then pastor; and where was a noted shrine of St. Stephen, to which multitudes were drawn by the fame of the cures there effected. Among these instances—too many to recount, Augustine reports one of which he had personal knowledge.—A certain woman, he says, had lost her infant son, then at the breast, and unbaptized—catechumenus. Seeing him gone irrecoverably, she wept for him, more as a *believer*, than as a mother:—cœpit eum magis flere *fideliter* quam mater (materne). For she desired not his life otherwise than for the sake of the life eternal; and it was on this account that she mourned for him, as having perished. Filled with pious affection and confidence, she bore him, dead as he was, in her arms, and running to the oratory of the Blessed Martyr Stephen, began there *to demand of him*

(St. Stephen) her son (mark the words), et cucurrit ad Memoriam Beati Martyris Stephani, et cœpit *ab illo exigere filium*, et dicere, Sancte Martyr, &c.; and she thus prayed, 'Holy Martyr, thou seest that *all* solace has been snatched from me; for I cannot even say my son has 'gone before,' whom thou knowest to have perished. Thou seest then wherefore it is I weep. Restore my son, that I may have him before the eyes of him who crowned thee!' When she had prayed thus, and more to the same purpose, with tears, which did not so much *ask*, as *demand*, her son, he was restored to life! and inasmuch as she had said—Thou knowest wherefore I lament him, God would show what was her mind. Forthwith she carried him to the priests—he was baptized—he was sanctified—he was anointed—he received confirmation, and thus, all the sacraments having been administered to him—he was taken up—and the mother bore off (the body) with such an expression of joy as was fitting in carrying him—not to the repose of the sepulchre; but to the bosom of the martyr Stephen! Thus was proved the faithful heart of the woman. Seeing then—this is Augustine's inference—God wrought such a miracle by his martyr, could he not cure those (others whom just before he had mentioned.)

This then is that primitive 'invocation of the saints' which Oxford divines approve, while they sternly condemn that which the Articles and Homilies reprobate as *popish!* The ground of distinction we must leave it to themselves to fix; and meanwhile observe, what indeed is obvious—That, while the very same element of polytheistic feeling attaches to the *heathen*-heathen Camilla, and to the *christian*-heathen Mulier quædam of Uzali; with the latter, this sentiment—this passionate reliance upon the grace and power of the subordinate divinity, is immeasurably enhanced by the more powerful emotions, and by the far-reaching solicitudes, that belonged to the latter. Besides; while the one dared to ask nothing more than the ambiguous interposition implied in recovery from sickness, the other had been emboldened to ask—nay, to *demand*, a resurrection of her child from the dead; and whatever we may think of the alleged fact of this resurrection, this at least is certain, that every mother who then, with gasping eagerness, listened to Augustine, was encouraged to indulge a like confidence in any

similar instance. We say then, that the Nicene demonolatry—the system of shrine-going, solemnly sanctioned as it was by all the great men of the times, and by the very best of them, was a far more animated and soul-entrancing polytheism than was that of the dislodged gods and goddesses of the by-gone paganism.

In every system of polytheistic worship there has been a *localizing* of divinities; and this same tendency was peculiarly characteristic of the demon-christianism of the fourth century. The martyr-god, as to his miraculous agency, was always fixed to a spot; and even if he might hopefully be addressed by remote worshippers, they could barely expect his best favours unless they honoured him by making a journey to his shrine. Slender indeed, in many instances, was the film of connexion through which an oratory drew down, as to a focus, for the use of a province, and fixed there, the saint's presence and favour! Take an instance from Augustine.

Certain persons (or one of them) (of whom more presently) after fruitlessly seeking a cure at the shrine of St. Stephen at Ancona in Italy, had arrived in Africa, and had been more fortunate in propitiating his favour at Uzali.—Ecce ibi (at Ancona) non est curatus iste juvenis, ut nostris oculis servaretur. But how had it happened that an oratory of the proto-martyr was established at Ancona? Augustine reports the common belief on this subject, which in substance is this.—When Stephen was stoned, many indifferent spectators encircled the spot, as well as some of his christian brethren. It chanced that a stone, after striking the martyr's arm, rebounded, and fell at the feet of a certain religious person, who snatched it up, and preserved it. He was a traveller, and the chances of navigation brought him to the shores of Italy, at Ancona. There 'it was revealed to him,' that he should deposit the stone. He obeyed this 'divine intimation,' and complying with the command, there thence came to be an oratory of St. Stephen; and the rumour prevailed that there was also an *arm-bone* of the martyr! whereas in fact, nothing had been deposited but the stone that had rebounded from his arm—ἀγκὼν: —hence the name—Ancona. Augustine, however, is careful to note the fact—which *we* also shall do well to observe—That no

miracles had been wrought at that shrine until after the discovery of the relics of St. Stephen!

But even after this time, the miracles of the oratory of St. Stephen at Ancona were far inferior to those which were continually taking place at the more favoured Uzali. From among a multitude of instances, Augustine says he shall adduce one — ut videatis QUANTA SIT IBI PRÆSENTIA MAJESTATIS.

This has ever been the tendency of the human mind, when seduced from the great truth that religious worship is due to the One God, alone—first, to personify virtues or powers; and then, to fix the subordinate energy, so personified, to a spot—to fasten the petty divinity to his visible throne—to pin him down to his seat, where he may be found whenever, and as often as his votaries may have occasion for his aid. So fully had this tendency developed itself under its christian disguises, in the Nicene age, that each martyr had his local habitation, and almost every city and town its tutelar; and thus it was that a man like Augustine could, in compliance with the sovereign influence of the universal apostasy, promote, with all earnestness, this characteristic movement of the reviving heathenism.—What shrine is like the shrine of St. Stephen AT UZALI?—What miracles can be compared with those which are effected *there?* and how mighty is the energy of that 'majestic presence,' in the beams of which the favoured provinces of North Africa might bask! Far more meaning than meets the eye of the modern reader is couched in the words I have just, in part, quoted:—in fact they embody the very life and force of all pagan institutes—APUD UZALIM ubi est episcopus frater meus Evodius, quanta miracula ibi fiant quærite et invenietis. Prætermissis autem aliis, indico vobis unum quod ibi factum est, ut videatis quanta sit IBI PRÆSENTIA MAJESTATIS!

As Augustine was proceeding to narrate this one notable instance, he was interrupted, as was frequently the case, by a general clamour of the multitude, wrought up to a pitch of fanatical excitement by the bringing forward a girl who had just been cured by the martyr.—Et cum hæc diceret Augustinus, populus de memoria sancti Stephani clamare cœpit—'Deo gratias, Christo laudes.' In quo continuo clamore, puella quæ curata est, ad absidam (the recess or vaulted quire) perducta est. Qua visa,

populus cum gaudio et fletu, nullis interpositis sermonibus, sed solo strepitu interposito, aliquamdiu clamorem protraxit: et silentio facto, Augustinus episcopus dixit. . . .

Might so great a freedom be taken as to imagine the apostle Paul, after the uproar in the town-hall of Ephesus had subsided, suddenly transported through the intervening space and time, to the great church at Hippo? Let us imagine that the mere words —'laudes *Christo*' had not caught his ear.—But he has seen and heard every thing else:—he has seen crowds of persons, of all conditions, prostrating themselves before a richly decorated shrine:—he has heard these suppliants, in passionate language, urging their particular suits, and vociferating—O Sancte—O Gloriosissime—O Potentissime Amice Dei!—He has moreover witnessed some of the tricks and frauds by means of which the miracle-fame of the shrine is sustained:—he sees this shrine hung around with costly votive offerings, dedicated in grateful acknowledgment to the divinity.—It is the high festival of this divinity; the people of a wide district, in gay attire, crowd the public ways:—they bring with them baskets of fruit and meal and wine, and deposit them before the shrine: they rush to church, where they are entertained with the reading of 'a Book of Marvels'—Libellus de Miraculis.—The orator dilates upon the most signal instances of cure, or resurrection, which have been granted to those who—impleti affectu fiduciæ, had betaken themselves to the oratory of the god, and had 'merited' a gracious answer! This 'Teacher of the Gentiles,' whose voice had so often warned men 'to forsake dumb idols, and turn to the living and true God,' this Apostle, who had everywhere affirmed that there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man—this Apostle is then told that he is in a christian church—that the people around him are christians—and that the orator is—a christian bishop!

Let it not be supposed however that the Nicene divines forgot to remind the people, on the one hand, that the martyrs derived all their powers from God; or on the other hand, that their agency and intercession, although *most efficacious*, was not strictly omnipotent: far from it: they introduced these cautions and limitations, just as good Romanists have ever been careful to do. Let us hear Augustine—

'Stephen,' he says, 'triumphed—he was crowned—long time his body remained hid—at length, and when God saw fit, it came forth: it enlightened the lands—so many miracles did it effect; the Dead, because not dead indeed, made the dead to live. This therefore I would recommend to your attention, that you may understand—That although his prayers (St. Stephen's) avail to obtain many things, yet not all things. Hence we find in the Books (of his miracles) instances in which it was a matter of difficulty to him to obtain what he asked, and in which, at length, he obtained the boon—the faith of the petitioner not failing. The suit was urged, prayer continued, and at last God granted it, by Stephen. The reply to Stephen praying is—'She for whom thou prayest is not worthy:—she has done so and so.' Yet he (Stephen) sticks to it, and prays, and receives; and we should understand that, by him in whose name before he laid down the flesh, prayer was made, benefits are now granted, and that he still knows to whom they should be vouchsafed.'

Let it be affirmed that, in these passages, care enough is taken to save the great truths of religion, as to the supremacy of the One God, and the dependence and subordination of even the most exalted creatures. (These cautions were *not in fact* availing to this end.) But what was the tendency of this system of martyr-intercession—by means of which miraculous cures were every day effected—in relation to the great christian doctrine of THE SOLE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST?

I ask whether the Nicene doctrine and practice, touching the invocation of the saints, tended to uphold and to honour the mediatorial office of Christ, or to supersede and corrupt it?

Let this question be fairly answered.

But we proceed with Augustine. So firmly had the habit been formed of looking to the martyr-divinities for aid in pain or trouble, and so confidently were visits from them in vision expected, that the direct communion of the heart with God, in times of affliction, was, with the majority, scarcely thought of. Augustine, in illustration of his argument, refers to the instance of a woman, reported in a 'Book of Miraculous Cures,' who, being in an agony of pain, exclaimed—'I cannot bear this;' to whom it was said by the martyr himself, who had come to heal her—

What and if you had to endure a martyrdom?' And then in a contrary direction, the same alienation of the soul from God—the one source of every real good, was effected by the custom of applying to the martyrs for petty graces, and for favours of so trivial a kind that the petitioner would have been ashamed to ask them of any but an indulgent subordinate power or — crony god. It is not easy to imagine to what an extent these two influences must have vitiated every religious sentiment. Was a man in imminent peril, or did he suffer intolerable anguish?—he seeks relief from the proximate source—from the compassionate martyr at hand, who will hardly fail to run to his aid. Does he covet some childish gratification, or wish to rid himself of some vulgar annoyance?—The Blessed Stephen, or the Blessed Lawrence, may condescend to listen to a petition which it would be an impiety to carry to the Supreme Being! Augustine's *rationale* of this sort of petty piety is highly curious. How miserably did this great man, and his compeers, pervert their ingenuity, while labouring to turn to some good account the preposterous notions and practices of their times! The following passage is the exordium of the Sermon on the Feast of St. Lawrence.

Beati Martyris Laurentii dies sollemnis hodiernus est. Huic sollemnitati sanctæ lectiones congruæ sonuerunt. Audivimus et cantavimus et evangelicam lectionem intentissime accepimus. Martyrum ergo vestigia imitando sectemur, ne sollemnitates eorum inaniter celebremus. Cujus autem meriti sit memoratus martyr, quis ignorat? Quis ibi oravit, et non impetravit? Quam multis infirmis meritum ejus etiam temporalia beneficia præstitit, quæ ille contemsit. Concessa sunt enim, non ut precantium permaneret infirmitas; sed ut deterioribus concessis, amor fieret ad appetenda meliora. Quædam enim plerumque parva et ludicra concedit pater parvulis filiis, quæ maxime, nisi acceperint, plorant. Benigna et paterna indulgentia hæc impertit, hæc donat, quæ non vult permanere in filiis suis jam grandiusculis, jam proficientibus. Donat ergo pueris nuces, quibus servat hereditatem. Ludentibus et de quibusdam ludicris se oblectantibus cedit paterna pietas; ne deficiat ætatis infirmitas. Blandientis est hoc, non ædificantis.

Benignly willing as were the martyr-gods to make a scramble

of nuts and bon bons among their votaries, the preacher would not have the people forget the lofty bearing of these indulgent powers; he therefore adds—

Quod ædificaverunt martyres, quod capere potuerunt, quod grandi corde ceperunt, propter quod sanguinem fuderunt, audistis in evangelio—merces vestra copiosa est in cœlis. Nothing can be more melancholy than to follow a preacher like Augustine, while employed on subjects of this class, who, moved at once by the better impulses of his christian heart, and driven downward by the mighty current of the wide-spread delusions, mingles, in every paragraph, elevated and edifying sentiments, with the most pernicious advices; or with approving incidental references to a worship to which the people, with a sottish infatuation, were addicted. Well has the preacher insisted upon the canonical history of Stephen: he then turns to the shrine service which had called the multitude together. Alluding to the then recently imported relics, in honour of which the church was at that time crowded, he says—Martyr Stephanus, beatus et primus post apostolos ab apostolis diaconus ordinatus, ante apostolos coronatus; *illas* terras passus illustravit, *istas* (North Africa) mortuus visitavit, sed mortuus non visitaret, nisi et mortuus viveret. Exiguus pulvis tantum populum congregavit: cinis latet (in the shrine); beneficia patent. Cogitate carissim quæ nobis Deus servet in regione vivorum, qui tanta præstat de pulvere mortuorum. Caro Sancti Stephani per loca singula diffamatur: sed fidei ejus meritum commendatur.

It was thus that the thoughts of the people were concentrated towards the spot—the shrine—the particles of dust; and from thence, and from these, they were taught to expect, not simply ordinary or insensible aids, but the most stupendous exertions of miraculous power, even to the raising of the dead! And thus was a people dealt with, the majority of whom were still pagans in heart, as well as in all the habits of life. Among these habits none were more inveterate than that of wandering hither and thither, to obtain, at this or that celebrated fane, some desired benefit.

"Gruter's Table of Æsculapius," says the learned Montfaucon,*

* Antiquity, b. iv. cap. 6.

who seems unconscious of the analogy which his statements present—"is too remarkable to be passed over: for in it are seen either the wiles of the devil to deceive the credulous, or else the tricks of pagan priests, suborning men to dissemble diseases and miraculous cures.—This table consists of four separate articles, written in Greek, of which this that follows is a translation.—

"In those days Æsculapius admonished by oracle a blind man called Gaius, to repair to the holy altar; to prostrate himself there, and adore him; to go afterwards from the right to the left; to lay five fingers upon the altar, to lift up his hand, and to put it to his eyes. This he did, and recovered his sight, and publicly returned thanks to Æsculapius. The people also rejoiced with him, upon account of the great miracles that were done under the emperor Antoninus. The same god admonished Lucius, sick of a pleurisy, and despaired of by every body, to come and take ashes from the tribomus, or triple altar, and mingle them in wine, and then apply it to his side. He also recovered his health, and went to return public thanks to Æsculapius, the people also congratulating with him. The same divinity exhorted Julian, who was taken with a vomiting of blood, and past all hopes of recovery, to go and take from the tribomus some grains of pine apples, and eat them with honey three days. He likewise recovered and went to return public thanks. Valerius Aper, a blind soldier, was admonished in like manner by the same god to go and take the blood of a white cock, to mix it with honey to make a collyrium of it, and rub his eyes with it three days. He recovered his sight, and went to return public thanks to Æsculapius."

"One thing very remarkable is," says the same writer, "that, in the inscriptions made for vows, it is often said that it was done at the command of some god. Thus in an inscription above, he that fulfils the vow, says that he does it at the command of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, and in another, upon the admonition of Bellona—Bellonæ monito. Sometimes they say they received this admonition in a dream or vision, as in the inscriptions where it is read, Somno monitus, or somnio monita; which might very well be if we consider the force of prejudice and desire. In many inscriptions these vows are said to be made after a vision, and thus expressed, ex visu, or ex viso, or visu monitus; which

visions I take to be no more than dreams. There was also another way of receiving monitions from the gods, which was by presages, and which they expressed thus, viso omine. But of these presages, or omens, there was almost an infinite number and variety." . . . .

"To this oracle (Delphi) there was a prodigious concourse of people, who all came to consult the oracle. The rich repaired thither in great numbers, and found there conveniences for lodging, and persons to conduct them through all the holy places, and *relate the wonders that were done, as they said, every day.* Nothing could be better contrived to excite devout souls, nor no allurements more proper than these to extort large gifts from them, *by which means a great number of jugglers got a subsistence.*"

As face answereth to face in a glass, so does the martyr-worship of the Nicene age resemble the superannuated polytheism. Scarcely in a circumstance, and not at all in spirit or tendency, and only in the mere names of the divinities, could the Church claim the merit of any originality in this scheme of religion. But I have interrupted the bishop of Hippo, who was about to bring forward a signal instance of the miraculous powers of St. Stephen. The instance does indeed serve well, by its incidental allusions, to set before us the usages of the times, and the modes of feeling which were a main ingredient in the piety of the, so called, christian community.

The people had assembled day after day to listen to the Briefs of miracles lately effected at the shrine of the martyr; and to hear the descants and admonitions of their bishop thereupon. But now, instead of a 'Libellus,' Augustine brings forward two young persons, one of whom had actually received the martyr's favours, while the other was yet seeking them:—pro scriptura notitia, pro charta facies demonstratur.—Ambo fratres stent in conspectu vestro: ut qui *illum* (the one who was already healed) non viderant, in isto (the one not yet healed) videant quid *ille* patiebatur. Stent ergo ambo, unus cui donata est gratia, et alter, cui petenda est misericordia.

That there was management at the bottom of all this one cannot doubt: I am willing to believe, not Augustine's. The young man

whom the martyr had cured, came forward with his Brief in his hand, and thus addressed the bishop, in full church—

Rogo, Domine beatissime Papa Augustine, ut hunc libellum meum, quem *ex præcepto tuo*, obtuli, sanctæ plebi jubeas recitari.

'I beseech thee, very Blessed Sir—Papa Augustine, to command that this my Brief, which, at thy bidding, I have brought forward, may be read to this holy people.'

Then follows the Brief, which sets forth, in substance—That the mother of a family of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, having been insulted by her eldest son—her other children consenting, she, at the suggestion of a demon, had, from the baptismal font, to which she repaired for the purpose, uttered against them a malediction—sparsis crinibus nudatisque uberibus, which had taken terrible effect upon them all, in turn, and had sent them wanderers from land to land—a warning to mankind, and subject to a species of *delirium tremens*. The mother, smitten with compunction and horror, had hung herself in despair. One of these youths had repaired to the oratory of the glorious martyr Lawrence, then lately established at Ravenna, and there—to use the customary phrase in such cases—meruit sanitatem. Another—the subject of the Brief, with his younger sister, had gone from land to land, frequenting every shrine where God was used to work miracles, earnestly desirous of a cure. Not to speak of other celebrated shrines of the saints, he had visited, in the course of his travels, that at Ancona in Italy, where the Lord had performed many miracles by the most glorious martyr Stephen. But the desired cure was reserved for the same martyr's African shrine, whither he had come, incited by the fame of the wonders wrought by the blessed martyr Stephen at Uzali. Three months before the time then present, the brother and sister—Paul and Palladia, were both 'premonished in vision' (let this circumstance be noted) by a fair and venerable form, with a white beard, That they should be healed within three months; and 'this my sister,' says the youth, 'saw your reverence (Augustine), just as we now see you; by which it was signified to us that we should repair to this place:—and I indeed, in many other towns, on my journey, saw your blessedness, as I now behold you. Thus plainly admo-

nished by heaven, we came hither a fortnight ago. What my miserable condition then was, if you did not witness, you may now see in the case of my wretched sister here, who, for the instruction of all, is here presented to view, that in her seeing what lately I was, they may learn what the Lord hath wrought by his Holy Spirit. I prayed every day, with floods of tears, in the place where is the oratory of the most glorious martyr Stephen. On Sunday, as many then present witnessed, while praying with great weeping, I held the rails, and suddenly fell to the ground. Deprived of recollection, I knew not where I was. After a little I rose up, and found myself no longer subject to the tremor of the body! Not unmindful of so great a benefit received from God, I have brought forward this narrative (libellus) in which are set forth for your information, what I have suffered, and how restored; that so you may vouchsafe to pray for my sister, and to return thanks to God for me.'

This statement having been read, the bishop took the occasion for insisting upon the reciprocal duties of parents and children. He then adverts to the circumstance—which seems a little to hurt his modesty, of his appearance 'in vision,' and unconsciously, to this youth and his sister:—his mode of referring to this part of the story is characteristic—Quid enim sumus, quia ego apparui istis nesciens? Illi enim me videbant, et ego nesciebam, et admonebantur, ut ad istam civitatem venirent. Quis sum ego? Homo sum unus de multis, non de magnis. He then congratulates the people on the fact that this miracle, which *might* have taken place at Ancona, had been reserved for Africa:—and all the world knows how many miracles are wrought in this city by the most blessed martyr Stephen. In explanation, partially, of the fact, which seemed strange, that there had been *of old* an oratory of the martyr, although no relics; he introduces the story (already cited) of the stone that had struck the martyr. Thence he proceeds to another instance of the martyr's power and grace; but, hark! an outcry—a shout—a general tumult, and a hurried movement of the crowd!

The afflicted damsel, Palladia, who had stood on the steps beside her brother, in the view of the congregation, and her jaws chattering in an appalling manner, had slunk away, and gone to

the shrine.—There, and at this very nick of time—who would have dared to expect it?—she too, and while praying to the martyr—was perfectly restored, and quakes no more!—The preacher pauses, while shouts resound—'Deo gratias!—Christo laudes!'

Augustine adduces this same instance among others of the like quality, in the de Civitate Dei, where he accumulates proof that miracles had not ceased in that age. The case is of that sort which, as it does not involve the *unavoidable* alternative of a real miracle—or of a fraud, is important chiefly as illustrative of the religious style of the times; and as showing in what way (even the same as in all popish countries) the shrines of the saints were then frequented by crowds from distant places, who sought cures from the saints. In repeating this instance, Augustine expressly informs us that the girl, Palladia, had gone to the oratory *to pray to the holy martyr*. Illa enim ubi de gradibus descendit in quibus steterat, (the two had stood together on the steps, and a little beneath the bishop) AD SANCTUM MARTYREM ORARE PERREXERAT!

Augustine, and men like him, took great pains, by a frequent introduction of the phrases, Deus operatur—Dei gratia—Dominus per Sanctum, &c.—to guard the people against the polytheism upon which they were rushing:—but the people themselves, high and low—for persons of all conditions are seen commingled in the crowd that presses around the martyr's shrine, made no scruple of uttering their passionate requests in the informal style of earnest prayer, addressed to none but the benign Power there residing, who, whether mediately or immediately, they cared not, was looked to as the source of the favour desired.—With the people it is—'Dear Friend of Christ—have pity upon me!' Nor does Augustine—nor do his great contemporaries, scruple to report the language of the common people when they thus presented their petitions to—'the hearers of prayer.' Thus, and in the instance which next follows (and which has already been referred to) he coolly repeats such language as this, uttered by a woman prostrate before the shrine, with her eye fixed upon the silver coffer, wherein resided the 'present majesty,' hovering over some bone and shred of the martyr: Sancte martyr—Redde filium meum—'Holy martyr, give me back my son!'

We now turn to Augustine's more formal adduction of the abovementioned, and other instances, in his Civitas Dei. xxii. 8. 'You talk of the miracles which attended the promulgation of Christianity,' said objectors: 'tell us why do not miracles now attest it?' Augustine first replies to this taunting inquiry on the supposition that no such miracles as those of the gospel history continued to be wrought in his day. But he then goes on to say, that miracles were even then taking place, although not such, or of such authority, as were those of Christ and his apostles. Here however we should remind him that, if the miracles of the fourth century were *genuine*, they were not in any sense inferior to those recorded by the evangelists:—he himself mentions several instances in which the dead had been raised by the power or intercession of the martyrs. The *real* difference he was conscious of, although he does but obscurely express his feeling on the subject. —They were, in fact, and this he too well knew, all of them of a suspicious, or very questionable kind. Hence it was that, as we find, the better informed class, even of christian people, held them in utter contempt; while heretics, and philosophic pagans, openly derided them as jugglers' tricks. This might safely be inferred from Augustine's own language, which is remarkable enough, if we consider how stupendous were some of the miracles—*if they were miracles*, which he goes on to recount.—The miracles now occurring, he says, 'barely become known even to the population of the city or town in which they take place; and when recounted at a distance from the spot, they scarcely carry weight enough to get them believed, without difficulty and hesitation;—even when reported by christian people, to christian people.'

Augustine's first instance is that already adduced, of the blind butcher at Milan. His second, which he narrates at great length, is not available in argument on either side. It is a cure (of fistula) which might have taken place (under the circumstances) in the course of nature. Or if more than this be implied—and supposing we admit the facts as stated, it is of a kind of which more than a few are recorded, of remarkable restorations, following importunate prayer. And in *this case* it is especially to be noted, that there is no polytheistic admixture in the narrative:—no Amicus Dei, no Gloriosissimus, is invoked—no Sancte Martyr is uttered:

—the sufferer and his friends, on *this* occasion, were content to present their requests to Him who is indeed the 'Hearer of prayer.'

The third instance—That of a cancer cured, is nearly of the same complexion, and may take its place along with some which, in modern times, have been well attested. The suffering woman, we are told—ad solum Deum se orando converterat. Alas! that Augustine and his brethren could not rest at that point always! Superstitious circumstances attend this instance; but they need not detain us. Then follow several, frivolous enough —of cures by baptism, and by application of earth brought from the Holy Sepulchre;—and of dispossessions, of which nothing need be said: they are all inane and nugatory in the extreme. Gregory of Tours does not prate more foolishly. But if the reader wishes for a sample, let him take the following.—An old man, a tailor of Hippo—and a poor man, was so unlucky as to lose his hood (or cloak) and how to obtain another he knew not! What does he do?—To the Twenty Martyrs, who had a much-frequented oratory at Hippo, he prays with a loud voice for a cloak. Ad Viginti Martyres, quorum memoria apud nos est celeberrima, ut vestiretur oravit. Some irreverent youths who chanced to be passing at the time, profanely jested the poor tailor, on the subject of his devotions; as if he had asked of the martyrs a handful of pence to buy himself a cloak! He, good man, rising superior to their ridicule, went his way in silence. At ille tacitus ambulans—saw on the shore a great fish gasping, as if just cast up by the waves. With the aid of the very youths who had followed him, he secures the prize, and delivers it to a certain cook, named Catosus—a good Christian, to be corned;—it was worth to him three hundred pence (folles) with which he bought the wool whence his wife spun him a cloak! But this is not the end of the story. The honest cook, when he came to cut up the fish, found in its belly a gold ring; and, moved with compassion and influenced too by religious fear, he carried it to the tailor—saying 'See how the Twenty Martyrs have clad thee!' Ecce quomodo Viginti Martyres te vestierunt! Can we think it strange if the poor shoemakers, and the poor carpenters, and the poor smiths, of all the towns and villages of North Africa had recourse to this

kind-hearted "TWENTY" on similar occasions, when they heard so learned a bishop as Augustine—a doctor with whose fame the world then rung, telling this story of the poor tailor with approbation! We often hear certain classes of protestants scornfully reproached for allowing tailors, tinkers, and shoemakers, or men who may once have followed those trades, to usurp the office of christian teachers.—That such men should do so may be inexpedient. I have myself listened to some such unlearned teachers; and yet have never heard one who, with the Bible in his hand, would not have known how to rebuke and condemn the 'abominable idolatries' which the bishop of Hippo encouraged, and which his high name served to fasten upon christendom! Much better had one attend the ministrations of Bible-taught, unlearned men, than surrender one's faith, reason, conscience, to the guidance of the authorized and the erudite, who would beguile one into the worship of the Twenty, or the Forty Martyrs! But we return to Augustine.

On occasion of a festival procession, a vast multitude attending and meeting the bishop, who bore the relics of the most glorious martyr Stephen; as the dense crowd advanced toward the saint's oratory, a blind woman entreated to be led up to the bishop; he having the relics in his arms. Of the flowers which he carried she received some, and these she applied to her eyes; and forthwith she saw, and advanced with the crowd, needing none to lead her!

Lucillus, bishop of Sitifis (or Sitisis), while in procession with a multitude, and bearing some of the martyr's relics, was suddenly cured of a fistula!—by the mere carrying of the sacred fardel. A Spanish priest, named Eucharius, was healed of the stone (an inveterate malady in his case) by the shrine of the above-named martyr, brought to him (the coffer was portable) by his bishop. The priest, some while afterwards, lying dead, and the funeral rites in progress, was, by the succour—opitulatione, of the martyr, restored to life;—the priest's cloak having been brought direct from the oratory, and laid upon the corpse.

A certain noble person named Martial—a bitter enemy of the gospel, but whose daughter and her husband were Christians, and lately baptized, was dangerously ill. His children, with many

tears, had laboured to bring him over to the faith of Christ; but without effect. It then occurred to the son-in-law—visum est genero, that he should repair to the oratory of St. Stephen, and there do his utmost in praying that God would grant a right mind to his parent: this he did with much fervour—with sighs, tears, and groans. In retiring, he took from the altar some of the flowers strewed there (after the pagan fashion) and—it was already late, he laid these by his (father's) head, who so slept. At break of day he (the pagan father) calls for the bishop—who was then absent from his cure, and visiting Augustine:—the presbyters of the church came in his stead:—the sick man declares himself a Christian, and is baptized, to the joy and wonder of all.

Then follow seven instances of cure, and of raising the dead, by application of napkins brought from the martyr's shrine. What more need be said?—asks Augustine. The time would fail to recount all the instances of miraculous cures effected in and about Hippo, at the several shrines of the martyr, and by his means; and all within the compass of the two years during which the North African church had possessed his relics.—As to those wrought at Calama, where first an oratory of the martyr was established, they are innumerable! He will however add to those he has adduced, two—which however need not here detain us—the first being utterly frivolous, and the second has already been cited from the Festival Sermons.

In what mode of operation these miracles were effected, Augustine will not decide. Whether by the immediate agency of God himself—whether by the spirits of the martyrs—whether by the intervention of living men, or whether by the ministry of angels—quibus invisibiliter, immutabiliter, et incorporaliter, imperat, operetur; ut quæ per martyres fieri dicuntur, eis orantibus tantum, et impetrantibus, non etiam operantibus fiant—whether in these modes, or in others, not to be divined, yet so it is, that miracles *are* wrought, in support of the christian faith.

But whatever might be the invisible mechanism of the miraculous dispensation which was the great feature and prominent characteristic of the Christianity of the fourth and following centuries, the visible and intelligible bearing of it was—precisely the same then as now. To the mass of the people—the educated

and the uneducated, the shrine-worship—the invocation of saints —the veneration of relics—the pilgrimages from shrine to shrine, in quest of miraculous cures or other benefits, was nothing but a more profound and deep working paganism, which, while it effectually alienated the hearts of the people from the worship of God, and put out the light of the Gospel, opened to the clergy a door of gain and power, by means the most nefarious, and which could not be resorted to without thoroughly debauching their minds and manners.

Such has been this system of saint-worship in all countries where it has prevailed; and in every hour of its history, from the date of the Nicene council, or earlier, to the present moment.

REASONS FOR REJECTING THE NICENE MIRACLES.

THE evidence which has occupied the pages of this number, is but a small portion of that which I had provided, and had intended to adduce in support of my present argument. I had especially wished to bring forward a sample of miracles from each quarter of the ecclesiastical world, so far as its records are extant; and also what might show distinctly that the alleged miracles of the Nicene era were wrought chiefly, or exclusively, in attestation of those practices and opinions which the protestant churches have rejected, as *popish*.

This more ample proof could not, however, be now introduced without carrying the subject forward into another number; and so delaying the completion of my task, which I earnestly desire to bring to a close. The same motives must now curtail what I had proposed to advance, under several heads, as 'Reasons for rejecting the Nicene Miracles.' I can do little more than name these reasons;—but at the same time must profess my willingness and *readiness too*, to adduce, if required, abundant evidence in support of each of them.

Speaking of the alleged miracles of the fourth century in a mass, and of which a sample has been furnished in the preceding pages, I feel compelled to reject them as spurious, because—

1st. The narrations themselves, in their style, and circumstances, exhibit the indubitable characteristics of fraud and folly.

2dly. The facts, for the most part, are not so well attested as are many of like quality which the Church of Rome appeals to; and which, on good grounds, we nevertheless reject.

3dly. The miraculous pretensions of the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries, have been abandoned as indefensible by the most judicious modern writers; and even by some who have strenuously defended those of the first three centuries.

4thly. Evidence has transpired which shows that these pretended miracles were regarded with contempt by judicious persons at the time, even though Christians.

5thly. *The very writers* who, on Festival occasions, or at particular junctures, report and attest these miracles, do, in their more sober moments, and when calmly expounding Scripture, acknowledge that miracles had long ceased in the Church.

6thly. No such miracles as those of the fourth century were pretended in the preceding era, when they might seem more needed. If these miracles were genuine, they must be regarded as opening a *new* dispensation.

7thly. The miracles of the fourth and following centuries manifestly and directly subserved party and political purposes, and tended to enhance the influence, and to enrich the coffers of the clergy: and it is the clergy who report them.

8thly. They were all of them, or with very few exceptions, wrought to give authority to practices and opinions flagrantly opposed to the drift and purport of the Inspired Scriptures.

9thly. These miracles, in unbroken continuity—the same in style and circumstances, ran on into the times when a shameless idolatry—polytheism ripened into image-worship, had become universal; and which worship these same miracles supported and perpetuated.

10thly. As connected with the 'spiritual fornication' of the times, they are clearly predicted in the New Testament, as signs of the great Apostasy.

With most persons—not extremely infirm in judgment, the Reason first on the list will be amply sufficient, in relation to

nineteen out of twenty of all the legends of the Nicene and Romish Churches. *Such* narratives every sound mind rejects with contempt and abhorrence. But there *are*, it should always be admitted—although not belonging to the *Nicene* Church, yet to the Romish, narrations of a kind which require to be dealt with in a somewhat different manner, and which are not to be dismissed without an appeal to certain serious principles. In reference then to these peculiar instances, I beg to offer a few remarks.

The attempt to escape from the embarrassment we may feel, on such occasions, by doing violence to the admitted rules of historical logic, is of most dangerous consequence always; and, like all temporizing measures, tends only to aggravate the evil we would avoid. To refuse to listen to testimony which we should unquestionably admit as sufficient—*if it did not carry a consequence which we dislike*, is at once illogical, and in a sense, immoral; for it is a duty to yield to reasonable proof. It is on this very ground that we are accustomed to *blame* those who reject the christian evidences.

This resistance of sufficient testimony, in certain cases having a miraculous aspect, springs, at the bottom, from an assumption too hastily adopted—namely, that—Whatever is *preternatural* must also be *divine;* or in other words, that the purely natural course of physical causes is never disturbed but by the finger of God. I feel compelled to believe the contrary.

But it may then be asked—If events which in this sense are preternatural, may occur, and occur in connexion with religious doctrines or practices, what is our resource, or how are we to defend ourselves against satanic delusions? This very difficulty is supposed, and has been provided for in the Scriptures, and a rule given to which we are bound to adhere. Pretensions, more or less startling or perplexing, have arrested the notice of religious persons in every age; and so in our own; and it may be conjectured as not altogether improbable, that, yet again, and notwithstanding the general incredulity of the age, and the prevalence of science (nay, as a reaction from these very causes) a bold and astounding show of supernatural power may ere long waken the careless frivolity of the times. That some such reaction from the unbelief of the age was in store for us, as 'a trial,' has long been

my own expectation; and I could almost venture to predict (improbable as the occurrence may now seem—or may seem to some) that when the sifting of the historical evidence on which high church principles were too easily reared, has satisfied all reasonable men of their unsoundness; and when those maintaining these arrogant and 'fond' doctrines, though they will not confess it, shall *feel* themselves upborne only by a bubble, and that the ordinary methods of argument are no longer available to them—they, in high contempt of 'natural reason,' and of profane proof—or some of them, will gather up all their strength into one desperate leap toward the level of the supernatural, and thence challenge the unconditional submission of mankind, by 'new wonders,' which they shall have 'received power to work.' This very circuit was run by the adherents of the amiable and highly-gifted, but unhappy Edward Irving. Shall the followers of Oxford divines, a year or two hence, enact similar delusions?

Whether such an anticipation be likely to be realized or not, the course of the present argument demands that the question of the duty of a Christian, when his attention is challenged by alleged miracles, should be here briefly considered.—A question more important abstractedly, and more pertinent at the present moment than, perhaps, some persons may be willing to suppose.—

Whatever may be the doctrine in corroboration of which miracles are wrought, they can be of no avail to this end unless the great principles of Theology—the First Truths of the Being and Attributes of the One God, are first assumed. It is from this solid ground that an appeal to miracles in proof of a particular doctrine or system of belief must be made. Firmly persuaded "from the things that do appear," of the unity, wisdom, power, rectitude, and goodness of Him who is over all, and in whom all things consist, we accept as proof of the heavenly origin of a special revelation, such supernatural events as, while in themselves they comport with the *moral style* (let the phrase be admitted) of the universe, are in harmony, *as to their intention*, with those first truths.

No where in the course of the canonical history are miracles produced for the purpose of establishing First Truths. If men would learn these—if they would listen to the 'witness which God has given us,' as to his eternal power and goodness—let

them look around them! It is the beautiful framework of the universe—it is the constant course and circuit of its well-appointed seasons—it is the *uninterrupted* movements of this vast machine—it is the incessant noiseless agency of Him in whom we live and move and have our being, which attest to us the Being and Attributes of the Creator; and which would be always sufficient (were our minds in a healthy condition) to uphold in our hearts an unwavering confidence in the Supreme Wisdom and Benevolence.

Miracles, then, can never overrule or subvert the FIRST TRUTHS of religion; for their own inferential force is drawn altogether from those very truths. If these truths are surrendered, or held in suspense, then the occurrence of events not to be explained by referring them to any known natural causes, can have no other effect than that of confounding, so much the more, all our convictions, and of convulsing our souls with interminable and terrific surmises. The comfort and calm assurance which we derive from beholding the beauty, harmony, and *constancy* of nature, is violently snatched from us, and is superseded by conjectures the most appalling, when miracles occur which, in their obvious import, or in their ulterior consequence, subvert the first principles of religious faith; or intercept that correspondence between man and his Maker in which true religion consists.

But inasmuch as we every day see the divinely established order of nature (in the moral system) and which, when it takes its course, secures the happiness of all—rudely broken in upon, and to some extent turned out of its path, by the folly and wickedness of man—to whose free agency this power of disturbance is permitted, so we must not assume it to be incredible that partial disturbances of the course of nature, or what may seem to be such, may come within the permitted liberty of apostate invisible orders. The actual movements of a dark audacity of this sort is not obscurely indicated in the Scriptures; and many facts connected with the history of polytheistic worship confirm, if they do not undoubtedly establish, the same supposition.

Let it for a moment be assumed as true, and then we shall feel ourselves to be thrown upon a careful observance of the rule—a rule given to us in the Scriptures—to judge of miraculous pretensions always by their accordance with the first and great truths

of theology; or their tendency to subvert those truths, or to wean and seduce the hearts of men from the worship and love of God.

Now we will suppose that some of the Nicene miracles are as perplexing, as are in fact more than a few, appealed to and boasted of, by the church of Rome. We will suppose that there are *some* instances, which, as to the exterior facts, must not be dismissed, if the principles of historical evidence are to be respected; and which baffle every endeavour to explain them on any known or imaginable physical principles. We then appeal to the tendency, or drift, and ulterior consequence of such miracles. If in fact, and when regarded in the calmest and most comprehensive manner, such miracles have constantly operated to debauch the religious sentiments of mankind—if they have confirmed idolatrous practices—if they have enhanced that infatuation which has hurried men into the degrading worship of subordinate divinities;—we then boldly say that—whether natural or preternatural, such miracles are not from God; but from 'the Enemy:' And let it be well observed that in any such case, just in proportion as the evidence of a preternatural agency is strong, the presumption is also strengthened that the system or scheme of religion which rests on these miracles, is of Satanic origin.

Now let us apply this argument to the case of the Nicene Church. Rather than admit certain of the alleged miracles of the fourth century to have been abominable frauds, the admirers of 'primitive catholicity' would, I presume, strenuously affirm the reality of the miracles. Be it so.—

Let us then, with all possible indulgence and candour, review the system or scheme of martyr-worship which those miracles established. And let not this worship be hastily condemned, on a narrow adduction of evidence:—let us not judge of it as to its theological quality and tendency, until we have reviewed it in its course through long periods of time:—let us take in a cycle of fifteen hundred years.

In one word then, let the conscientious reader say, whether the practice of frequenting shrines, and of praying to the martyrs, and of importuning them for favours, common and supernatural—whether this practice, precisely such as we find it described and

recommended by the great writers and bishops of the Nicene church, has tended to preserve the purity and spirituality of that worship which should be rendered to God;—or whether it has had the directly contrary effect, and has been the PRINCIPAL MEANS, from the date of the council of Nice, to the present moment, of perpetuating a worship which has all the customary qualities, external and internal, of polytheism and idolatry?

If my allotted space permitted, I would here bring forward the acts, decisions, and arguments, of the *second* council of Nice, which was held to repress the 'heresy' of the iconoclasts, and to confirm and extend the worship of 'holy images,' and the veneration of 'holy pictures.' Thence it would unquestionably appear, that the impudent enormities of idol-worship and polytheism, which that council professed and defended, were nothing more than the natural and inevitable consequences of the martyr-worship established by the great men of the fourth century. The continuity connecting the later with the earlier practice is most obvious, and beyond the reach of ingenuity to dispute.

The miracles then which set this system of idolatry on its legs, and gave so much vigour to its infancy, were directly opposed, not merely in their abstract or hypothetical tendency; but in their actual and proximate consequence, to the FIRST TRUTHS of religion; and they did subvert, and supersede, and corrupt the worship of God, and did seduce men again to the service of dumb idols, and fasten upon the christian nations those 'chains of darkness' which drew them abject behind the cars of demons.

Do you choose to affirm the supernatural reality of the Nicene miracles?—You then mark the Nicene church as the slave and agent of 'the Father of Lies.'

But to make good our steps on this ground we are furnished with clear and abundant aid from the inspired writings. Throughout the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament it is assumed as probable, and in several instances is predicted as certain, That false miracles, or events really or apparently preternatural, would be appealed to by seducers; and that these treasonable attempts upon the constancy and loyalty of the faithful, should well nigh prove successful, even with them, and should too easily prevail with the multitude, drawing them on to the depths of spiritual

fornication and adultery:—that is, to polytheism and idolatry. It must therefore be a great point of christian duty, not merely to stand prepared to resist the fiery darts of the devil; but to repel and expose his wiles; and consequently those men act the part of traitors who teach the doctrine of believing always, and who tell the people that to doubt is a sin, and that it does not belong to them to 'prove all things,' or indeed any thing.

'If there arise among you,' says Moses in his final charge to the people, 'a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder; and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God, with all your heart and with all your soul.' Deut. xiii. 1—3.*

The prophets follow up this cautionary rule in many instances which the reader will easily remember; and which apply, in a striking, and even graphic manner, to the signs and wonders, and to the dreams and the visions of the Nicene age; all of which had the tendency to lead the people to 'go after' and put their trust in 'other gods.' After every admissible apology has been advanced

* Ephraim Syrus, in paraphrasing the words of Moses says—caveti, ne auscultetis eis, idololatriam suadentibus. How did his own church regard this caution in listening to those workers of wonders who taught the people to crowd around the shrines of the martyrs, and to implore their assistance? Chrysostom's comment on this same passage, if detached from the context, one would imagine to have been directed against the very practices which we have lately heard him so zealously promoting. "Hear what says God.—If there shall arise a prophet, &c. That is to say—If any prophet shall profess—I am able *to raise the dead*—or to *heal the blind*, if only ye will obey me and will worship demons, or yield religious service to idols. And then if he who thus speaks is indeed able to restore the blind, or to raise the dead—not even in that case shall ye be persuaded by him, saith he: and why? Because God, that he may try thee, grants to such a prophet to be able to do this. Not indeed as if he were ignorant of thy dispositions. But if he thus spake to the Jews, *much more to us*, to whom he hath taught a better philosophy—to whom he hath opened the door of the resurrection, and whom he hath forbidden to attach themselves to things present, commanding us to fix all our hopes upon the life to come."—Tom. i. p. 834, and a similar passage, p. 730.

in behalf of the martyr-worship of 'Primitive Catholicity,' must it not be granted to have been—a dangerous practice?—Was it not, in scripture phrase, 'a stumbling-block' to the christian commonwealth of that age? If so, and seeing that it was eagerly promoted by all the teachers and authorities to whom the people listened, the application of a passage like the following is sure and certain:—

'Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumbling-block of their iniquity before their face; should I be inquired of at all by them? Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God: Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling-block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet, I the Lord will answer him according to the multitude of his idols. That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols.' Ezek. xiv. 3—5.

In these, and many similar passages, all the conditions of the Nicene polytheism are included:—and especially this—that there would be, in the professions and conduct of the people, an intimate and almost unconscious admixture of idolatrous predilections and practices, with an exterior submission to the service and commands of God.—Nothing can be more pointedly characteristic of the christian paganism of the fourth century:—priests and people saying aloud—'The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are we;' while priest and people, with a mad perversity, were repeating every folly and delusion of the pagan temples.

We do not now inquire whether certain predictions of Christ and the Apostles are applicable to the Nicene, or to the Romish church; but we appeal to them as a proof that, at some time then future, there should arise, from the very bosom of the Church, false prophets, professing themselves to be the servants of God, who should 'show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect.' *At some time* then future, miracles, or preternatural events, brought about by 'the power of Satan,' should seduce the multitude from the truth. The power so coming in the place of the obsolete paganism should

'deceive them that dwell upon the earth, by the means of those miracles which he had power to do.'

With such cautions before us, a serious guilt must be incurred by those who, in the fondness of an easy credulity, admit as true every pretension to miraculous powers, and who, because the wonder-worker professes great zeal for God, allow him to lead them into practices flagrantly opposed to the spirit and precepts of the Scriptures.

By the evidence above cited it appears—

1st. That the veneration of relics, the invocation of the dead saints, the adorations and festival-worship carried on at celebrated shrines, and the custom of making pilgrimages to such shrines, were as prevalent in the Fourth, as in the following centuries; and that they constituted the prominent feature of the popular religion of the times.

2dly. That this system of worship was not merely winked at by the leading men of the Church, but was zealously promoted by them, and received their warmest commendations; and was held in credit by a species of support on particular occasions which touches, too nearly, their reputation for common honesty and piety.

3dly. That this worship was constantly and intimately connected with a system of professed miracles, which, *if real*, should compel our approval of the same worship; or at least must preclude our condemnation of it: or, *if spurious*, must be held to mark broadly the church system of the fourth century with the deepest stains of fraud, idolatry, and blasphemy.

But the most cogent reasons compel us to reject these miracles as spurious, as well as to condemn the worship they recommended as idolatrous.

It only remains then to apply our conclusions to the particular case of those whose faith and honour are pledged to the formularies of the Established Church. In making this application, while I shall carefully avoid, so far as the occasion permits, whatever might seem offensive, I shall not think myself precluded, on any ground, from carrying my argument home to its just conclusions.

IMPORT OF THE TWENTY-SECOND OF THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES.

In what way, or by what system of casuistry the writers of the Tracts for the Times are used to reconcile themselves to their position, as ministers of the Protestant Church of England, while they condemn that which the Reformers approved, and approve that which these sternly condemned, I have no wish to inquire.

A far more important question—a question in which every Englishman is concerned, is this—Whether the Church of England allows and favours, or rejects and condemns, THAT INVOCATION OF THE SAINTS, AND VENERATION OF RELICS, WHICH PREVAILED THROUGHOUT CHRISTENDOM IN THE FOURTH CENTURY?

This question does not seem to be in itself a peculiarly obscure or difficult one; or to demand any extraordinary acuteness or skill in discussing it. I shall here consider it as coming altogether within the range of a common understanding, guided by an ordinary measure of information. I make pretensions to nothing more; and I am not in this instance to be rebutted by the advice—'not to meddle with things too high for me.' It were strange indeed if a layman could not be permitted to form an opinion on such a point; and equally so, if having with care formed his opinion, he might not express it.

I shall consider the TWENTY-SECOND ARTICLE in its several clauses, premising nothing but this—That I mean to pay no regard whatever to evasions, subterfuges, or refined distinctions, of that sort which would be rejected with contempt if advanced in extenuation of a sinister course of conduct in civil life.

We are however (by our immediate subject) confined to the latter of the several points referred to in the article. This article condemns as 'fond, and vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, and as repugnant to the word of God'—the ROMISH doctrine concerning—

'Worshipping and adoration, as well of Images as of Reliques; and also invocation of saints.'

The ROMISH doctrine.—

Apart from collateral evidence this phrase might possibly admit of either of the two interpretations—

1st. That, while the *Romish* doctrine on these points is condemned, there *is some other doctrine*, favourable to the opinions and practices in question, which is not condemned by it.—

Or 2d. That, in accordance with the usage of the human mind, and the ordinary customs of speech, the genus is here denominated by the species :—the species being at the time, not merely the proximate object; but that which was obtruded upon their notice by the peculiar circumstances of the framers of the article: as if it were said—We condemn the *Romish* doctrine, with which especially we have now to do; and, by necessary inference, every other doctrine, or practice, *like to it;* or which has the same *qualities*, and is obnoxious to the very same objections.

Now I suppose that none but a few astute and sinuous minds have ever imagined that the framers of this article intended any thing else than to condemn the Romish doctrine :—*and with it every other doctrine like it.* If this be not the intention of the article, the most decisive reasons to the contrary should be produced. Apart from any such reasons, this is clearly the interpretation which it is *the safest* to put upon it ;—that is to say, if we would enjoy the comforts of a 'good conscience.'

Suppose the case that, in some remote quarter of the world, a church were still extant, which, although it had held no correspondence with Rome; and knew nothing of the middle ages, yet professed a doctrine *precisely similar* to the Romish, on these points; or so nearly identical that the differences, whatever they might be, amounted only to some shades of diversity. In this case, surely, no man subscribing the TWENTY-SECOND Article, could honestly minister within that other church, on the mere plea that his subscription bound him to nothing but the reprobation of what is actually *Romish*. Such a plea would be rejected as a frivolous evasion—most disgraceful to whoever would attempt to avail himself of it, and in a matter touching religious consistency.

We must conclude then—That if in fact the TWENTY-SECOND Article may honestly be subscribed by those who approve, or who do not decisively condemn the practice of invoking the saints,

and venerating relics, *as prevalent in the fourth century*, it must be on the ground of some clearly defined and essential difference, in *quality* and in *tendency*, between the Romish, and the Nicene doctrine and practice, in these instances.

But I now appeal to the conscientious reader to say—Whether any such difference in religious tendency, or actual quality, distinguishes the one from the other doctrine;—or whether an upright man would wish to rest his reputation upon the assumed fact of any such difference? I might ask, whether the habit of claiming a benefit, and enjoying emoluments, on the plea of such an alleged difference, must not benumb the moral sense, and fatally deprave the religious sentiments?

But we need not stop here. The Twenty-second Article does not simply *denominate* the objects of its reprobation, but it describes them; or rather—by specifying *the grounds of its condemnation*, it carries forth its meaning toward whatever is clearly obnoxious *to those specific objections*. If therefore there be *any other* doctrine, *not Romish*, which, like it, is also 'fond,' and 'vainly invented,' and is 'grounded upon no warranty of Scripture,' but is 'rather repugnant thereto;' then *such* doctrine, coming as it does within the reach of the same categories, is as certainly condemned as it could have been had it actually been specified. We cannot hesitate to reject any endeavour to evade so plain a consequence.

It remains then to inquire, what meaning ought to be attached to the phrases subjoined, *as descriptive of the doctrine condemned*; and to ask whether, fairly understood, they apply to the doctrine and practices of the Nicene church.

—A FOND THING.—

The term (now almost obsolete in the sense in which it is here, and so appropriately used) conveyed, at the time when the Articles were framed, the idea of some object pursued, and embraced, with a passionate and childish eagerness, and which, in itself, has but a very ambiguous title to any kind of respect.

The English language barely offers a term so precisely fitting the prevalent martyr-worship of the ancient and ante-Romish church as does this. In later ages—that is to say, in the times of the *Romish* supremacy, and when the invocation of saints and

veneration of relics had settled down into the grave forms of a long-established usage, and had gathered to itself the venerable recommendations of antiquity, and had been sobered, as all religious observances are in course of time, by a perfunctory dulness —*then*, perhaps, the epithet "fond' might seem in some degree less exact. But how well does it picture to the very life—the eager, wistful, wild infatuations of the people of the Nicene age, who, in the constantly stimulated expectation of miraculous aids, were crowding around every shrine, and there, with a stormy impatience, were calling upon their new gods to help them! A peculiar feature of the martyr-worship of the Nicene church was (must we not say it?) the erotic fervours with which the shrines were besieged by women. And was not this 'Primitive and Catholic' 'invocation of Saints, and veneration of Reliques' a 'fond thing,' when mothers, prostrate on the pavement before a martyr's coffer, vociferated their demands—'Dear friend of Christ, save me'—'Most glorious friend of God, have pity upon me?' Was not *this* worship a 'fond thing,' when young ladies, thrusting their heads within sacred enclosures, had their faces stroked by the smooth hand of an invisible *martyr?* Was it not a 'fond thing,' when every prurient fancy was inflamed—inflamed by the language of the gravest doctors, to expect bright nocturnal visitations of roseate and perfumed deacons?

One might imagine that, as if to justify by anticipation the very language of the article, Chrysostom—the golden-mouthed, had composed that passage, already cited, in which, with a flowing fervour, he incites his too ready hearers to court the martyrs from the skies—to embrace their shrines with a fiery affection—to entreat their graces—to wait for their smiles, and to hope for the favours of heaven through their intercession!

Even if it could be said that the *Romish* 'invocation of saints and veneration of reliques' is not 'a fond thing,' the *Nicene* assuredly was such, and is thus far reprobated by the article—*a fortiori.*

—VAINLY INVENTED.—

Here again, and most decisively, the terms in which the reprobated doctrine and practice are described, if they be applicable to the *Romish* observances, are so only in a secondary or derivative

sense; while, in an absolute sense, they can be applied *only to the Nicene worship;* or to a worship still more ancient.

Except so far as the Romish church added divinities to her Calendar, and legends to her Acta Sanctorum, *she did not invent,* whether wisely or vainly, this polytheism. She inherited the whole of it—in principle—in spirit, and in its details, from the Nicene church. We might indeed, in a sense, exempt even the ancient church from the charge of *inventing* that which, in fact, she did but adopt and re-edit. The *inventors,* strictly, were the originators of the obsolete paganism.

Too much reason is there to believe that a fatal ambition, on the part of the bishops of the *third* century, had given the first impulse to this infatuation.—Men like Gregory of Neo-Cæsarea, too eager to grasp the people, on any terms, within the arms of the church, allowed a yet pagan populace to cling to their inveterate habits, under the thin disguise of new appellations. The church had been used 'fondly' to pray *for* the dead:—these nominal converts, might they not therefore be allowed to pray *to* them?—and then to celebrate their Parentalia, and other ancient rites, with every customary excess! Such, as it seems, was the origin of the invocation of saints, and veneration of relics; and how 'vain,' how pernicious, how presumptuous an invention let all history declare! *

I now ask whether the descriptive phrase—'vainly invented,' can be attributed to the *Romish* doctrine of the invocation of saints, and veneration of relics, in *any sense* which does not fully apply, and even with more exactness to the Nicene? It is a

* "After the Decian persecution, during which many in this region had died as martyrs, he (Gregory) appointed a general festival in honour of the martyrs, and suffered the rugged multitude to celebrate this with the same sort of feasts as those which were usual at the heathen commemorations of the dead (Parentalia) and other heathen festivals. He thought that thus one obstacle to conversion would be removed, and that if they had once become members of the Christian Church, they would by degrees voluntarily renounce sensuous indulgences, after their minds should have become spiritualized through Christianity. But he forgot what an intermixture of heathen and christian views, and rites, might arise from this acquiescence in heathen customs, as really did happen afterwards, and how difficult it is for Christianity to penetrate properly into the life, when it is debased from the beginning with such an admixture."—*Neander,* by Rose, vol. ii. p. 412.

circumstance not unimportant to note in this connexion, that the very words—inventio, and εὕρεσις, so perpetually occurring in the ecclesiastical writers, whenever new old bones were brought to light, give a *literal fitness* to the phrase employed by the framers of the article, and seem so to mark the thing intended as must preclude all evasion of their meaning.

—GROUNDED UPON NO WARRANTY OF SCRIPTURE.—

That so enormous an impiety as that of offering prayer to Dead Men, and of opening temples where they might be supplicated, should have prevailed among communities possessed of the Scriptures; and that this blasphemy, accompanied as it too often was, with the most offensive excesses of pagan debauchery, should have been, not only witnessed, but promoted by men well acquainted with the inspired writings, may justly be regarded as one of the most singular as well as melancholy facts in the sad history of human infatuations. The uninitiated modern reader will be apt to suppose that men like Chrysostom—the two Gregories—Basil—Ambrose, and Augustine, must have had in their view—how much soever misinterpreted, some texts which might seem to give a colour to this impiety. What were these texts? What was that 'warranty of Scripture' on which it was grounded? The reader will hardly believe that, in the festival orations of the Nicene divines, perpetual changes are rung upon such as these—'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints'—'The heavens declare the glory of God'—'Day unto day uttereth speech!' Such, and so ample, was that 'warranty of Scripture' which sustained the religious observances of the fourth century! We may be sure that every text apparently available for the purpose, has been culled by the diligence of modern Romanists, when labouring to defend their church against the imputation of idolatry. Peter Dens, under the title of 'the Worship and Invocation of the Saints,' &c., appeals, in this behalf, to the instances of the reverence paid to angels by the patriarchs—to the authority of Tobit—to that of the Second Book of Maccabees—to the fact that good offices are rendered to us by the angels—and that Moses was a mediator between God and the people!

Was then the Nicene worship of the saints sustained by *any other*, or by *any better* 'warranty of Scripture' than that which is

adduced in behalf of the Romish? If not, then the TWENTY-SECOND Article condemns, by the clearest implication, the *Nicene*, when it condemns the *Romish* doctrine, as destitute of Scripture warrant.

—BUT RATHER REPUGNANT TO THE WORD OF GOD.

What is God's Holy Word, but a solemn testimony—an awful caution, uttered from age to age, against that inveterate infatuation of our fallen nature which has impelled mankind, from the earliest periods to the present—to pay religious honours to subordinate powers, and to worship the creature rather, and instead of, the Creator? What were the Jewish prophets, but stern reprovers of this very propensity to seek help from the divinities vainly worshipped by the nations?—That the Nicene divines, with the Scriptures in their hands, and with the corruptions of polytheism actually before their eyes, should not have discerned this *first characteristic* of revealed religion, is indeed amazing. Sad spectacle, when men of intelligence, men able to quote Prophets and Apostles so copiously, are seen driving a fanatical mob before them, up to this or that gaudy pagoda, there to prostrate themselves before a silver box of bones, and to cry—'Holy martyr, save us!' In no instance comparable to this, has the Awful Majesty of Heaven been so insulted by men to whom the Scriptures have been granted.

Yet it is this very impiety—it is the 'primitive' and 'respectably supported' doctrine of the invocation of saints, and veneration of relics, which the writers of the Tracts for the Times now reserve to themselves, as not having been condemned, like the Romish, by the church under whose auspices they minister, and whose emoluments they enjoy!

On a view of the case then, I ask—

Does not the TWENTY-SECOND-ARTICLE, which every clergyman subscribes—does it not, when it condemns the *Romish* doctrine on the points before us, because 'a fond thing'—and 'vainly invented'—and 'not founded on warranty of Scripture—but rather contrary thereto'—does it not, *a fortiori*, condemn the Nicene doctrine, of which the Romish is but a repetition?

If it be said—'We approve *only* of that invocation of the saints,

and veneration of relics *which is really primitive and catholic;* and we are not to be understood as assenting to what may have been the irregular practices of particular churches, even in the fourth century'—

We then ask—Where are the records of that primitive and catholic doctrine to be found?—We do not find them at all until we find them in the writings of the very men whom it has been the laboured endeavour of the Tract writers, through a course of years, to hoist into the place of absolute authority! What becomes of the toil of so many years employed in preparing the way for a return of the church from the guidance of the Reformers to that of the Nicene Fathers, if, after all, in so material and so serious a matter, the authority of these Fathers must be rejected, and would, if submitted to, plunge us into the abominations of idolatry?

But if in fact the supposed record of the more ancient—the 'primitive and truly catholic doctrine of invocation,' &c. could be produced, so that we might, without ambiguity, fall back upon it, severed from the corruptions of the fourth century, would it—could it appear to be any better sustained by 'warranty of Scripture,' than is that of the Nicene church? The Thirty-nine Articles specify the books admitted as canonical, and which are collectively styled 'Holy Scripture.' These books are in our hands.—Do they then encourage *any sort* of invocation of saints, or any veneration of relics? — If not, then those who subscribe the Articles could be no more at liberty to adopt the *earlier*, than they are to admit the later form of this worship.

Again. It is well known that those who framed the 'Articles of Religion' condemned and rejected these impieties on *broad grounds;* and for reasons applicable not less to the *Nicene*, than to the *Romish* form of it:—if indeed the two might be distinguished. The Homilies, and the other writings of these great, good, and *honest* men, abundantly show what their mind was in this instance.

But to this it is replied—'We of this day are not bound by any induction of the private and personal opinions of the men who drew up, or who set forth the formularies of the church; but only by the bare letter of them—if even by that.'—

Be it so. We then use this plea on another side.—It has been pretended that the Articles and Homilies must not be interpreted in a sense which, by direct inference, would destroy the credit, or weaken the authority of the Nicene Fathers, inasmuch as the English Reformers (at least) are well known to have deferred much to them; and to have followed their guidance; and do perpetually cite them in terms of high respect, even in these very Homilies, in which, with so much force of language, they inveigh against *popish* corruptions. Their style in these instances proves, it is alleged, that they did not mean to include, in their vituperations, the doctrines and practices of the Nicene church.

We reply—If clergymen now subscribing the formularies of the church are not bound by what may have been the private and personal opinions of the men who drew them up; but are to look simply to the letter;—then neither can they avail themselves of an inference from any such known opinions, in evading the clear import of *the letter* of the Articles. The Article in question condemns a certain doctrine and practice, on grounds specified.—But the same reasons apply in full force, nay, in greater, to the Nicene doctrine and practice:—and they do so, notwithstanding the known opinion of the framers, as to the Fathers of the fourth century.

The Book of Homilies—and we may now confine ourselves to it, afford the most convincing evidence of the fact that the Reformers, generally, and these writers particularly, had never maturely considered the opinions which they should hold as to the extent of the deference due to the Fathers;—or that they had not found leisure to make their protestations consist with that opinion. Occupied as they were, and embarrassed on every side, and compelled to defend their position, at the peril of their lives, against assailants from opposite quarters, they too often shifted their ground to feel, or to be conscious, of the abrupt transitions they were making.

The instances are numberless, in the Homilies, in which the writer quotes Augustine, Chrysostom, Jerome, Basil, and the Gregories, as witnesses against doctrines or practices which the same Augustine, Chrysostom, Jerome, Basil, and the Gregories, most strenuously maintained. This inconsistency—to whatever

cause it may be attributable, obtrudes itself especially in those places where the impieties now in question are reproved.—The reader who has happened to become acquainted with the Fathers, is startled and perplexed when he finds these Fathers thus perpetually arrayed against themselves, by writers who assuredly had read them.

It would be a work of no difficulty, though of some labour, to adduce instances enough to place this strange inconsequence in a clear light:

For the present, we are content to say—That, if the known opinions of the Reformers and Martyrs of the English church be on both sides put out of view, or removed from the equation, then, and if the *letter* of the Articles and Homilies be admitted to express the sense of the church—the Church does stand wholly clear of the guilt of sharing with Rome in the abominations of martyr-worship—' invocation of saints, and veneration of reliques.'

Thank God, very many of the clergy, of this day, are still cordially opposed to these pestilent and insidious superstitions, and would be ready to carry, by acclamation, the Twenty-second Article, in the most extensive sense which its terms may bear. But it may be questioned whether even these faithful sons of the church, and *true* successors of the Reformers, are fully alive to the dark import of that ' temptation' which, as a pestilential mist, has spread itself over the ecclesiastical surface.

Let then a word—most submissively and respectfully offered, be listened to.—

A feeling of sad perplexity depresses the mind in the perusal of the Nicene divines, when men like Chrysostom and Augustine (to name no others) are found labouring to uphold and promote impieties of the most frightful kind. The question presents itself, again and again, What could have been the motives that induced *such men* to pursue such a course? A complete and altogether satisfactory solution of this problem is not perhaps to be expected. Yet a partial solution of it obtrudes itself upon our notice, in pursuing the history of the times. Too evident is it that, in the then position of the Church, struggling hard for supremacy with the waning paganism, and waging a doubtful war with arianism, and other forms of heterodoxy—the vast scheme of martyr-worship

—with its licentious festivals, its fanatical excitements, and its daily wonders, offered a powerful means of carrying the day, and of securing the support of the mass of the people. With this engine at work, the civil power was overawed, heretics (themselves superstitious) brow-beat, or confounded, and the 'rugged multitude' cajoled, flattered, debauched, fleeced. Especially does it appear that the cures and miracles professed to be wrought at the shrines of the martyrs were employed as the means of COAXING THE MOB TO SUPPORT THE CHURCH IN OPPRESSING THE SEVERAL BODIES OF SEPARATISTS.

Influenced by motives so unworthy—the great men of the Nicene age—how unwisely! how traitorously! more than connived at that which they could not but feel to be in the highest degree dangerous to the souls of the people; and thus yielding to this 'temptation,' the base idolatry of the sixth and seventh centuries grew, with a terrible rapidity of expansion, from the teaching and conduct of the illustrious men of the fourth.

Does then—I respectfully ask, does the present position of the episcopal clergy, as related to the political tendencies of the times, and to the rivalries of other religious bodies, offer any points of analogy, which might suggest a caution as drawn from the history of the fourth century?

This is evident, that 'church principles,' as revived by the writers of the Tracts for the Times, offer an aid—how false an aid! to the episcopal clergy in the perilous contests of the day—political and religious. But what, as now at last developed, is the core and purport of church principles?—

It is most evident that the re-establishment of a stern hierarchical despotism, founded on principles loftier and more profound, and more spiritual, than those of the Romish tyranny, *is the real intention of this movement.* No one can now doubt this. But what are the means employed for effecting this frightful purpose?—'The very same that have, in every age, been resorted to for the very same purpose—namely—the promotion of superstitions; and especially of those superstitions which, by debauching the clergy, and by depriving them of *conscience,* render them the submissive tools of a cruel despotism; and which, by vilifying the people, render *them* its helpless victims.

Why is it that, through the wiles, and disguises, and plausible insinuations, and cautious 'feelers,' of EIGHTY-NINE ambiguous publications, these writers have been working their way on toward an avowal of their wish to restore the saint-worship and shrine-services of 'primitive catholicity?'—It would be an affectation of simplicity to doubt the motive of all these long-drawn sinuosities.

But it is said, the traitorous attempt has already failed by the incautious haste of its authors. Alas! it has failed, only to extend itself in a more insidious manner. The fatal machine has indeed exploded; but the fragments have covered the land, carrying with them a fire that smoulders in a corner of almost every parish church. Principles *essentially anti-protestant*, and which work directly counter to the Reformation, and which quash effectively, though silently, all evangelic feeling, are entertained (it is too evident) by very many who still cordially assent to the Twenty-second Article, and who would reject with indignation any *obtrusive* form of the ancient polytheistic superstition.

The revivers of church principles will be content, for a season, with this, their tacit triumph. They well know that the leaven will work in its time; and that, even if the 'protestant prejudices' of the men of this generation should forbid the immediate success of their machinations, their more docile sons—schooled by themselves, will eagerly listen to 'sound teaching.' It may be so;—and should the yet faithful protestant clergy continue to be silent, presuming that the 'Oxford heresy' will quickly fall into oblivion, it probably will. But are we then so absurd as to imagine that the people of this country are likely to be gulled by the frauds and impieties of martyr-worship? No:—this cloud shall never again darken the skies of England.—THE PEOPLE will not be so fooled.—What then *is* the danger which may reasonably be apprehended?

It is this—That the clergy, seduced by the lure of church principles, should silently surrender the PROTESTANT Episcopal Church to the growing influence of its insidious enemies, who, favoured but a little more, will hurry it on to its overthrow, in the company of Rome, when the 'idols of the nations' shall fall to be seen no more.

ANCIENT CHRISTIANITY;

No. 8,

PROTESTANTISM OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

(THE HOMILIES AND LITURGY.)

LONDON:—JACKSON AND WALFORD.

CONTENTS OF THE EIGHTH NUMBER.

PAGE

Protestantism of the Established Church 379

Attitude of the Church of England toward the Papacy 386

Comparison of the Aaronic and Papal Hierarchies 403

The Church of England—along with the Fathers, asserts the Sole Authority of the Canonical Scriptures 423

The Church of England rejects Ancient, as well as Romish Corruptions 469

The Liturgy—Protestant 489

No. 8.] [Price 2s. 6d.

ANCIENT CHRISTIANITY,

&c. &c.

Romanism, and nothing else, has become the subject of the great argument which the Oxford Tract writers have originated. Candour now scarcely demands that the alleged distinction between the Anglo-catholic Church System, and the Faith and Worship of the Tridentine council, should any longer be much regarded. This difference, be it what it may, affects no fundamental principle; and whatever it might once amount to, it is at this moment vanishing like a mist, at sunrise.

By an inevitable process of absorption, operating on the one side, or on the other, the very persons, notable as they may be, who have hitherto stood so boldly forward as the harbingers of a new era, are threatened with annihilation, as leaders; and, whether they retain their places in the Church by a compromise of principle; or preserve consistency in retreating, they can no longer guide the movement of the times; but must follow it.

The position occupied by these divines, and their adherents, within the pale of the Reformed Church of England, has become, and is becoming intolerable:—intolerable, we may presume, to themselves;—and most distressing to those who contemplate it. A painful emotion is excited, even by witnessing from a distance, the self-inflicted martyrdom of men who, deserving high respect, as they do, on many grounds, are seen clinging to a Protestant Church, as if on the floor of a furnace, around which, and beneath and above, the fire is raging.

This trial of nerve cannot, one would think, be long continued; but when it terminates, and in whatever manner it may terminate, the momentary pause which may ensue, will be only a breathing time, before the commencement of a conflict between the Romish despotism, and every thing, sacred and civil, which is true and precious.

Too near at hand has Rome regarded the possible subjugation of the Church of England—and so of England itself; and, through her, of the world, to allow her to draw off from so high an enterprise, at the first overthrow. Let it be that her pioneers —the Tract writers of Oxford, shall have forfeited their influence by their indiscretion, and their precipitancy; and by their too late consistency; the harm will have been all to themselves. If indeed these individuals are no longer able to serve the Church, in this warfare, she will find cloisters, at home or abroad, where they may peacefully employ the remainder of their years in penance. As for Rome, she will not long look about for tools of her own preparing, thoroughly tempered for her work.

Through an agency which none would have dared to speak of as likely to undertake such a task, the axioms of the papacy, and the pregnant elements of the great Apostasy, together with those peculiar tastes which are its characteristics, have, in the short period of ten years, effected a very extensive lodgment within the enclosures of the Established Church. A large number of the clergy, have been persuaded to pledge themselves to these principles, and they must now either sustain them at all risks, or suffer the loss of reputation. Moreover, by whatever means (and we are not called upon to hazard any conjectures as to these means) the favour of the periodic press has been secured on the same side. Nor is there any reason to believe that new measures, even the very boldest, which may be devised, at Rome, are likely to become abortive from the want of funds to give them effect.

Whatever may be the measures next resorted to, and whether these be insidious, or openly aggressive (probably both) England will doubtless be the theatre of this high endeavour to accomplish, *at last*, the desires of the Gregories and Innocents of the middle ages. If England were re-conquered for the church, then the wide world would lie prostrate at the foot of St. Peter's chair!

The same rule (the rule of modern warfare) which will make England the scene of this crusade, will, of course, bring upon the Episcopal Church the brunt of the attack. If the Episcopal Church could but be brought home to the maternal bosom, it would then be an easy work to dispose—in the ancient manner, of a few obstinate dissidents!

But do we then seriously anticipate the success of an enterprise like this? Assuredly not; and yet such an extent of success as would involve the probability of civil commotion, and the lasting damage of our institutions—or even the shaking of the Throne, and a foreign interference in our home affairs, might easily ensue from an indolent contempt of the danger, in the Protestant community at large; and from an ambiguous course of conduct, pursued on the part of the Episcopal Church.

Some sense of the danger which is imminent at this moment, has however been excited; and some auspicious movements, suggested by these fears, seem to be in preparation.—But the Enemy will placidly wait until episcopal warnings have died away in faint echoes: and then he will set to work, both upon clergy and people; or even if the former should be on their guard, the latter will not be so—unless provided far better than they now are, against the treachery of the assault of which they will be the objects.

The LAITY of the Episcopal Church, I venture to say, should now be so instructed as to be able to repel the endeavours which, undoubtedly, will forthwith be made—and made with immeasurably more skill, tact, and *condescension* than has been displayed by the writers of the crude tracts 'ad Populum'—to seduce them to bend the knee to the demons of the papal superstition. To the indolence of the upper and intellectual classes, the fair theory of the Universal Vicarship, will be presented in bright tints; and with it the seemly attractions of a worship which, elegantly sensuous as it is, lulls the moral consciousness; but the untaught and the wretched, whose misery and despair impel them to catch at any gleam of relief—at any hope which will consort with sin, these will be plied with the universally acceptable lures of a gross and tawdry idol-worship, and of pardons—purchasable for a penny!

The middle and sound-minded classes, may perhaps be left for a while unassailed.—Nevertheless it is these (it is these who will listen) that should now be informed and prepared to aid in sustaining Protestantism, liberty—all things true and dear. The middle classes—the real strength of the country, should constitute also the strength and stay of the Church; and for this purpose they should be summoned to take their position within it.

The LAITY of the Episcopal Church, we are bold to affirm, should at this moment be led by the hand, and restored to their place, and to their just influence, as the living, conscious, voluntary constituents of 'that congregation of faithful men,' to which the Church itself has applied the term—'A CHURCH.'

A renovation of the Episcopal Church—such as this, might, not improbably, produce an effect upon the Romish deliberations, similar to that which resulted from the arming and training of the people when England, forty years ago, was threatened with invasion:—the enemy was appalled; and he desisted from his project.

England—ecclesiastically, will not henceforth have to cope with a band of college recluses—knowing little or nothing of the world, and who have dashed their own enterprize by miscalculations, precipitancy, and temerity. The chiefs of the papacy—our antagonists now, are men altogether of another stamp. Ruled by no conscience but that of the Church—and what a conscience is that!—they will act with the caution and calculation of probabilities, which belong to well-trained statesmen of the Machiavellian school. These men, estimating the chances of success, as balanced against the fatal consequence of a defeat which might drive the papacy in upon its citadel, may think it prudent not to prosecute measures which are seen to awaken the people of England, and to rouse them to the defence of their faith and liberties.

Indications have actually appeared of an awakening on the part of the laity to the perils of the Episcopal Church; and the writers of the Tracts for the Times may (if they please) number this among their successes—that they have at length penetrated the dull ear of the people.—They addressed several of their early papers 'ad Populum'—and THE PEOPLE have at last begun to comprehend their meaning! At length the people—the intelli-

gent, right-minded middle classes, have caught the purport of this learned debate, and are uttering their feeling thereupon ;—and they will yet, perhaps, speak it more plainly and more generally.

The temper of the people of England has been vastly misunderstood by those who have thought of them only with a view to their spiritual subjugation. The intelligence of the middle classes has been undervalued, as well as the amount of their information ; and therefore the effect likely to be produced by the promulgation of the naked enormities of the papal superstitions has been so strangely miscalculated.

It would be well if the spontaneous expression of opinion, *among the laity*, and in private circles, when the Oxford Tract doctrines are spoken of, could be listened to by those who are therein most concerned. It does not always happen that the clergy hear such opinions, uttered in all the force and freedom of incidental discourse. We may confidently affirm that this free opinion of the laity, although it may be in some degree sluggish, or passive, sets most decisively, and in the proportion of a thousand to one—against the entire mass of papal, and of semi-papal corruptions.

Shall then this feeling—the understratum of the English mind, be left to subside until some provocation shall rouse it to an ungovernable resentment?—or shall it be cherished—informed, and *employed* in such modes as would at once ripen, strengthen, and compose it ?

Surely those fears and jealousies take a wrong direction which, at this moment, and with the view of excluding the risks of popular interference, would sever the clergy from the people. And yet must not this be the actual consequence of leaving the people to think and speak *separately*, and sullenly too, in the belief that the clergy are influenced by other motives, and hold other opinions? If indeed they hold the same opinions, and if indeed they are governed by the same sentiments of cordial attachment to the Church, as Protestant, and Reformed—the Church of the sixteenth century, then nothing but an augmentation of strength could result from an ingenuous, cordial, and frequent interchange of feelings, on the great question of the

Papal despotism, and its superstitions. All proprieties might be respected in promoting this interchange of feeling between the clergy and the people; nor have the latter, if frankly dealt with, and properly consulted, ever shown themselves reluctant to give honour to whom honour is due; or to conform themselves to conventional and established modes of proceeding.—Never have the people of this country scouted lawful authority, unless they have found themselves contemned, deluded, or betrayed.

Without annoying the reader with apologies for my boldness in doing so, I venture to offer suggestions such as these; and even if the urgency of the moment were less imperative and serious than it is, I should find it needful, by nearly the same statements, to explain the course I am taking in the present instance.

In the last number of this work I announced my intention to consider—(and with the view of completing my task) 'The Deference rendered by the English Reformers to the Fathers, and to the Ancient Church'—a subject intricate, and critical, although susceptible of a satisfactory conclusion.

This deference, explicable as it is, has embarrassed every controversy which has arisen during the course of three centuries; and until the subject be finally disposed of, it will continue to generate perplexities, and to bring every thing around it into frequent jeopardy.

With all submission and diffidence, I hope to contribute something—by the means of an analysis of the facts—toward bringing about a consummation so much to be desired.

But the real value—the *weight* of the Deference that was rendered by the Reformers to antiquity, can never be correctly estimated, until the mind and meaning of the Church on the great theme of the Reformation, be clearly set forth, and be made good by such corroborations as the case demands.

To whatever extent the English Reformers might defer to antiquity, it is always true that the Established Church, as her mind is most decisively expressed in her Formularies—is

Protestant, and therefore irreconcilably opposed to the Papacy, and to the superstitions and corruptions which the Papacy inherited, and which it now maintains.

There would seem to be no possibility of raising a question on this point. Nevertheless the Ninetieth Tract, and the many publications which have appeared in its support, have shown that nothing is impracticable in argument, and that no difficulties are enough to baffle learned ingenuity!

And inasmuch as very many of the clergy have been seen to assent—tacitly or openly, to the incredible obliquities of this Tract, the laity, in mere respect to their well-informed spiritual guides, may come to distrust their own common sense, and to believe that every dogma of Romanism, and each of its base superstitions may be held and professed and practised, consistently with the obligations of those who minister within the Established Church!

I would gladly labour in the endeavour to dispel any such fatal and monstrous supposition. In attempting this—the occasion emboldens me to make the attempt,—I must be understood as now wishing to gain the ear of the laity of the Established Church. With this hope and intention, I shall therefore find it necessary to cite the Formularies of the Church more at length than would have been requisite or proper, if clerical readers only, or chiefly, were to be regarded; for there is reason to doubt if the lay members of the Established Church are generally conversant with these documents, or whether a mere reference to such and such a Homily, would be enough to bring the passage intended to the reader's recollection.

There may even be room to surmise that the Articles—the Ordination Services, and the oaths taken by clergymen, are not very distinctly borne in mind by all who are in the communion of the Church. Influenced by these doubts, and with the earnest wish to render these pages conclusive and satisfactory to every candid reader, I shall not scruple to quote a few pages from the Homilies, and to cite the other documents of the Church (well as these must be remembered by every clergyman) in support of my argument.

ATTITUDE OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND TOWARD THE PAPACY.

THROUGHOUT our present argument, the question will not be, how *ought* the Formularies of the Church to have been modelled and worded? but how they *are*. Our subject is not Liturgical reform, but Clerical consistency.

For example:—Different opinions may be entertained on the question whether the Athanasian Creed might not well be dispensed with, even in regard to the maintenance and honour of trinitarian doctrine. But there can be but one verdict, if it be asked, whether a socinian or unitarian may, with a good conscience, take upon himself the vows of a Church of England minister? It is *now*, at least, universally admitted that this cannot be done without incurring the deepest guilt of a solemn prevarication.

The case before us is strictly analogous to this which the right feeling of our times has so peremptorily determined.

In perusing the Homilies, especially, we may sometimes wish that certain modes of expression had been softened, or altogether avoided. We may think some part of the argumentation not strictly conclusive; and it is certain that more than a few of the citations are either inaccurate, or are inconsequential for the purposes they are intended to subserve.

But passing these, or any similar grounds of special exception, and gathering the general purport and drift of the Book of Homilies; and taking into the account also the categorical and binding affirmations of the Articles; we then ask, if those who speak reverently of the Church of Rome, as 'Christ's true Church,' and who—if she would retract an error here and there, profess to desire re-union and reconciliation (the papacy continuing essentially what it is) if men thus minded can retain their position as ministers of the Protestant Established Church, with a good conscience, and an unsullied professional honour?

Most persons will acknowledge that there can be but one answer to such a question. Yet, to exclude evasions, we shall now cite a few passages, expressing, somewhat roughly perhaps,

the mind and feeling of the Church of England toward the papal usurpation, and its superstitions.

Does the Church of England hold the Church of Rome to be Christ's true Church?

Does the Church of England favour the wish for reconciliation with Rome; or speak of a return to the papal domination as desirable, or as possible?

We may safely gather a reply to these questions from a very few passages; for if these are such as could never have been framed by men courting reconciliation with Rome, and making it their boast that they derive the whole of their ministerial authority through this channel; then neither can these documents be regarded with cordial respect by those who *do* thus feel toward the Romish Church.

What, then, is the customary style in which the Church of Rome is mentioned throughout the Book of Homilies?

—But as preliminary to our citations, we should observe, that we are not now assuming to define the precise limits of that regard, or dutiful respect, which a clergyman owes to the Book of Homilies. This seems indeed to be pretty well determined by the Article thereto relating; but we are content to take the lowest ground which it can be allowable to assume in this instance.

An utter contrariety of feeling and opinion on a subject, in itself the most momentous, and which touches every article of faith, and every rule of duty and discipline, can never surely consist with even the most vague profession to receive, assent to, and approve, the 'Book of Homilies.'

What is in itself false and irreverent can neither be 'godly and wholesome,' nor can it be 'necessary' for *any* 'time' whatever. But if the Church of Rome be Christ's true Church (although in error) then the Book of Homilies, from the beginning to the end, abounds with pernicious calumnies, not to say blasphemies.

In the second part of the Homily 'against Peril of Idolatry,' it is allowed that those of the "ancient fathers" who had been converted to the Christian faith from heathenism, have "let somewhat slip out of their pens sounding for images, rather as Gentiles than Christians. . . . . Much more doth it follow that the opinion of all the rabblement of the Popish Church,

maintaining images, ought to be esteemed of small or no authority. . . ."

The Church of England, then, sets the example to her members of speaking of the Church of Rome in terms of extreme contempt; and it leads them to think of the bishops of Rome—not as the repositaries of Christ's authority, but as his enemies. For further on in the same sermon, where the conduct of the Greek emperors in destroying images is commended, it is added:—

"Now on the contrary part, *note ye*, that the bishops of Rome, being no ordinary magistrates, appointed of God out of their diocese, but usurpers of princes' authority, contrary to God's word, were the maintainers of images against God's word, and stirrers up of sedition and rebellion, and workers of continual treason against their sovereign lords, contrary to God's law, and the ordinances of all human laws; being not only ENEMIES TO GOD, but also rebels and traitors against their princes. These be the first bringers in of images openly in churches; these be the maintainers of them in the churches; and these be the means whereby they have maintained them, to wit, conspiracy, treason, and rebellion against God, and their princes."

This strong language is no where else contradicted in the authorized formularies of the Church; and *therefore*, those are true to their profession, as its members and ministers, who thus think and speak of the bishops of Rome, even the entire succession of them, from the seventh century to the present time.

Convulsive endeavours to escape from so fatal a conclusion—efforts like those of one nailed to a stake, have lately been made by some, with the intention to show, that the most explicit and the least ambiguous of all the prophecies has been misinterpreted by protestants. But this course is not allowed, as we shall see, to those who respect their clerical obligations.—

The decking of images, idols, and churches, as practised by the Romish Church, indicates, we are told, her understanding of the arts of spiritual fornication.

"For she [the Church of Rome] being indeed not only a HARLOT, *as the Scripture calleth her*, but also a foul, filthy, old withered harlot—for she is indeed of ancient years; and understanding her lack of natural and true beauty, and great loathsome-

ness which of herself she hath, doth, after the custom of such harlots, paint herself, and deck and tire herself with gold, pearl, stone, and all kind of precious jewels; that she, shining with the outward glory and beauty of them, may please the foolish fantasy of fond lovers, and so entice them to spiritual fornication with her, who, if they saw her, I will not say naked, but in simple apparel, would abhor her as the filthiest and foulest harlot that ever was seen, according as appeareth by the description of the garnishing of the great strumpet of all strumpets, the mother of whoredom, set forth by St. John in his Revelation; who by her glory provoked the princes of the earth to commit whoredom with her. Whereas, *on the contrary part*, THE TRUE CHURCH OF GOD, as a chaste matron," &c.—*Third Part, against Peril of Idolatry.*

The Church of England, therefore, teaches us to look out of the pale of the Romish communion for the TRUE CHURCH OF GOD; and pronounces that the Church of Rome is indeed that blasphemous usurper of spiritual power, described in the Apocalypse. Some may choose to think and speak otherwise; but in doing so, they so far dissent from the Church, and contemn its decisions.

Those pretensions to universal vicarship, which the advocates of Church principles have virtually admitted, and even built upon, as the foundation of their own theory of Church power, the Church of England explicitly and solemnly rejects, as well in theory as in fact. Thus in the second part of the 'Sermon for Whit Sunday.' The Holy Ghost, it is there said, was to remain always with the true Church; but it has not been with the Church of Rome for many centuries; *therefore*, the Church of Rome is not Christ's own Church, but his enemy.

"But now herein standeth the controversy: Whether all men do justly arrogate to themselves the Holy Ghost, or no? The bishops of Rome have for a long time made a sore challenge thereunto, reasoning for themselves after this sort: 'The Holy Ghost,' say they, 'was promised to the Church, and never forsaketh the Church; but we are the chief heads, and the principal part of the Church, therefore, we have the Holy Ghost for ever; and whatsoever things we decree are undoubted verities, and oracles of the Holy Ghost.'

"That ye may perceive the weakness of this argument, it is needful to teach you first what the true Church of Christ is, and then to confer the Church of Rome therewith, to discern how well they agree together.

"The true Church is a universal congregation or fellowship of God's faithful and elect people, &c. . . . . Now if you will compare this with the Church of Rome, not as it was in the beginning, but as it is at present, and hath been for the space of nine hundred years and odd, you shall well perceive the state thereof to be so far wide from the nature of the true Church, *that nothing can be more.* For neither are they built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, retaining the sound and pure doctrine of Christ Jesus; neither yet do they order the sacraments, . . ." &c.

"To be short; look what our Saviour Christ pronounced of the Scribes and Pharisees in the Gospel; the same may be boldly, and with safe conscience pronounced of the bishops of Rome, namely, that they have forsaken, and daily do forsake, the commandments of God, to erect and set up their own constitutions. Which thing being true, *as all they which have any light of God's word must needs confess*, we may well conclude, according to the rule of Augustine, that the bishops of Rome and their adherents ARE NOT THE TRUE CHURCH OF CHRIST; much less then to be taken as chief heads and rulers of the same. Whosoever, saith he, do dissent from the Scriptures concerning the Head, although they be found in all places where the Church is appointed, yet are they not in the Church—*a plain place, concluding directly against the church of Rome!*

"Where is now the Holy Ghost, which they so stoutly do claim to themselves? Where is now the Spirit of truth, that will not suffer them in anywise to err? If it be possible to be there where THE TRUE CHURCH IS NOT, then is it at Rome; otherwise it is but a vain brag, and nothing else.

"And here let us take heed that we understand not these, or such other like places, which so straitly command obedience to superiors, and so straitly punished rebellion and disobedience to the same, to be meant in any condition of the pretenced or coloured power of the bishop of Rome. For truly the Scripture of God alloweth no such usurped power, full of enormities,

abusions, and blasphemies; but the true meaning of these and such places be, to extol and set forth God's true ordinance, and the authority of God's anointed kings, and of their officers appointed under them; and concerning *the usurped power* of the bishop of Rome, which he most wrongfully challengeth as the successor of Christ and Peter, we may easily perceive how false, feigned, and forged it is, not only in that it hath no sufficient ground in Holy Scripture, but also by the fruits and doctrine thereof. For our Saviour Christ and St. Peter teach most earnestly and agreeably, obedience to kings as to the chief and supreme rulers in this world next under God; but the bishop of Rome teacheth, that they that are under him, are free from all burdens and charges of the commonwealth, and obedience toward their prince, most clearly against Christ's doctrine and St. Peter's. *He ought, therefore, rather to be called* ANTICHRIST, and the successor of the Scribes and Pharisees, than Christ's vicar, or St. Peter's successor, seeing that not only in this point," &c.—*Sermon on Obedience: Third Part.*

"Such (ravening wolves in sheep's clothing) were *all* the popes and prelates of Rome, for the most part, as doth well appear in the story of their lives; and therefore they are worthily accounted among the number of false prophets, and false Christs, which deceive the world a long while. The Lord of heaven and earth defend us from their tyranny and pride, that they never enter into his vineyard again, to the disturbance of his silly poor flock; but that they may be utterly confounded and put to flight in all parts of the world. And He of his great mercy so work in all men's hearts by the mighty power of the Holy Ghost, that the comfortable Gospel of his Son Christ may be truly preached, truly received, and truly followed in all places, to the beating down of sin, death, the pope, the devil, *and all the kingdom of antichrist;* that the scattered and dispersed sheep being at length gathered into one fold, we may in the end rest all together in the bosom of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, there to be partakers of eternal and everlasting life, through the merits and death of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen."

This language, equally just and forcible, may be disallowed by some; nevertheless it stands as the solemn testimony of the

Church of England against the Romish Church; and it is her maturely considered arraignment of that communion, as—"the Antichrist."

The Sermon 'against Wilful Rebellion,' (Part 5), rejects the pretensions of the bishop of Rome, on broad grounds—'the reasons being most certainly derived from precepts and examples of Scripture,' which condemns also the modern Theory of Church principles. At the same time the fact is affirmed, in illustration of this argument, that the corruption of Christianity dates from the time when its ministers were impelled by motives of ambition to stretch spiritual powers beyond due limits. This allegation must lead us to look to a much earlier time than the conversion of Constantine, as the period of declension. (See the Apostolical Constitutions,—a work of the third century.)

This temper in the bishop of Rome made him, we are told, "at once the spoiler and destroyer, both of the Church, which is the kingdom of our Saviour Christ, and of the Christian empire, and all Christian kingdoms, as an universal tyrant over all."

Surely that theory must be heavily laden with its own consequences, which compels us, in one aspect, to regard a long series of persons as the sole possessors and dispensers of the choicest graces of heaven, and in another aspect, as 'Tyrants,' 'Usurpers,' and 'Special Instruments of the Devil.' We may well, on such an occasion, put the apostolic queries—"What concord hath Christ with Belial?"—or, "Can a fountain send forth *at the same place* sweet water and bitter?"

"Wherefore let all good subjects, knowing these (the popes) as THE SPECIAL INSTRUMENTS, and MINISTERS OF THE DEVIL to the stirring up of all rebellions, *avoid and flee them*, and the pestilent suggestions of such foreign usurpers and their adherents, and embrace all obedience to God, and their natural princes and sovereigns, that they may enjoy God's blessings, and their prince's favour, in all peace, quietness, security in this world, and finally attain, through Christ our Saviour, life everlasting, in the world to come; which God the Father, for the same our Saviour Jesus Christ's sake, grant unto us all, to whom, &c."

The good taste and amenities of our times may suggest that, when adopting the vigorous language of the Church as our own,

we should substitute modern equivalents for some obsolete phrases. Let it be so. But to hold and profess an opinion on a subject so momentous, diametrically opposed to that so often and so emphatically advanced in its authentic documents, is a course of conduct which religious principle must condemn; and which professional honour indignantly rejects.

The Church of England, by its very plain declarations, and its uniform principle, affirms the Pontifical Power, and the communion of Rome to be—'ANTICHRIST'—'the enemy of God'—'a foul and cruel tyranny'—the 'apocalyptic harlot, and mother of all abominations.'

So long, therefore, as the people are taught in any sense to respect the Homilies, it is implied that they should thus think of the Church of Rome; whether the language in which this opinion is conveyed be more or less emphatic.

This unequivocal condemnation of the Romish Church, as an antichristian tyranny—repeated as it is in so many places throughout the Book of Homilies, is not, however, peculiar to them; but is either expressed, or necessarily implied, in other of the formularies or constitutions of the Church of England.

In the 30th Canon, concerning the 'use of the sign of the cross in baptism,' the phrases—'that corruption of popery,' and 'all popish superstition and error,' and, 'the abolishing of popery,' are proper to, and could with consistency be employed only by, a Church, Protestant in principle; and which, by the very law of its ecclesiastical existence, is irreconcilably at variance with the Romish.

Very recently a noted champion of Church Principles has disallowed the customary protestant style in speaking of the martyr-bishops of Mary's time, that they "suffered for the TRUTH." And yet in this very canon, these same martyrs are designated as "those reverend Fathers and great divines, in the days of King Edward VI., of whom some constantly suffered *for the profession* of THE TRUTH:" and of this Truth, the first principle was—a rejection of the pretensions of Rome, as Christ's true Church.

To what extent the terms of the 110th canon may apply to those who—within the pale of the Protestant Church, are avowedly

labouring to "break again the bone that was badly set at the Reformation," we will not say. But the mind of the Church, as herein expressed, cannot be misunderstood.—

110. "*Schismatics to be presented.*—If the churchwardens, or quest men, or assistants do or shall know any man within their parish, or elsewhere, that is *a hinderer of the Word of God*, to be read or sincerely preached, or of the execution of these our constitutions, or a FAUTOR *of any usurped or foreign power*, by the laws of this realm justly rejected and taken away, or a defender of Popish and erroneous doctrine, they shall detect and present the same to the bishop of the diocese, or ordinary of the place, to be censured and punished according to such ecclesiastical laws as are prescribed in that behalf."

Were any such honest "quest men," at this moment to be sent abroad, in search of persons "popishly given" (canon 114) whither they would turn their steps we will not say; but must affirm that the Church of England holds one language only regarding the Romish Church; and it so speaks, whether in incidental allusions, or in its most solemn adjurations.

Even if a paragraph, or a sentence, in a Homily might be evaded, or might be held loosely by the conscience; it is not so, surely, with an oath.—It cannot be that an oath, rendered doubly binding by the peculiarity of the occasion on which it is taken, should be treated as nugatory.

When the Homilies apply to Popery every phrase of indignant reprobation, it may perhaps be imagined that what they had in view was its more glaring corruptions. But 'The Oath of the Queen's Supremacy' rejects with vehemence that very pretension which is not merely the most ancient of its errors, but which is a dogma, chief in its own esteem, and the key-stone of the edifice—that doctrine apart from which Romanism would be Romanism no more; or nothing but a toothless superstition. This Oath, although it must be in every one's recollection, it is proper here to cite, that its separate clauses may be compared with some illustrative passages.

"And before the Gospel" (in the ordination services) "the Bishop, sitting in his Chair, shall cause the Oath of the Queen's

Supremacy, and against the power and authority of all foreign Potentates, to be ministered unto every one of them that are to be ordered.

"The Oath of the Queen's Sovereignty.

"I, A. B. do swear that I do from my heart abhor, detest and abjure, as impious and heretical, that damnable Doctrine and Position, that Princes excommunicated or deprived by the Pope, or any Authority of the See of Rome, may be deposed, or murdered by their Subjects; or any other whatsoever. And I do declare that no foreign Prince, Person, Prelate, State, or Potentate, hath, or ought to have, any Jurisdiction, Power, Superiority, Pre-eminence or Authority, Ecclesiastical or Spiritual, within this Realm. So help me God."

This Oath, ministered on the most serious of all occasions, to those who are to represent her in their several spheres, the Church has well considered, not merely as to the phrases employed, but in regard to the implications it necessarily conveys. By such an expression of its meaning it binds the consciences of its deacons, its priests, its bishops;—and by these implications they must abide.

That the reference in this oath is to Rome, all must allow:—it can be to no other Power. It is the Church of Rome that has professed, and has acted upon the "impious, heretical, and damnable doctrine," herein specified. Whether the Church of Rome may have withdrawn or renounced the doctrine, is not a question with which we are here concerned. Whether mistaken or not in the *fact* (and assuredly she is *not* mistaken) the English Church, by imputing to Rome a heresy so atrocious, as well as "damnable," declares, in the most emphatic manner, what is her sense of the wickedness and the doctrinal pravity of the papal despotism. And as in her Homilies, so also in her Canons, and so in this Oath, which she does not cease to exact from her ministers, the Church speaks of Popery in terms not surpassed, as to energy of reprobation, by the formularies of any other Protestant communion.

But the latter clauses of the Oath of Supremacy have a still more conclusive bearing upon the question—Whether the English Church admits, or utterly rejects the fundamental principle of the

Papacy. If she rejects this first principle, then no retrenchment of abuses, no renunciation of particular errors, can avail for rendering a coalescence of the two communions possible. So long as the Oath of Supremacy continues to be ministered to the deacons, priests, and bishops of the one Church; and so long as these are mindful of their solemn obligations, the two must stand apart.

Those therefore who, at the present moment, are "compassing" such a reconciliation, must necessarily be understood to have relieved their consciences—in some manner, of their oath; and to look forward also to its erasure from the formularies of the Church. In other words, to wish, and to promote a reunion of the Churches, is the same thing as to desire, and to lead forward, a revolution—Ecclesiastical and Civil.

Nothing can be more clear or inevitable than are these consequences. Let the reader consider the facts.—

Romanism, by its very definition, and as it is distinguished from the Eastern, and from the Protestant Churches, is—apart from its body of doctrines, worship, and discipline, a scheme of UNIVERSAL SPIRITUAL GOVERNMENT. Romanism is a pretended right, vested in its chief, to rule the human family; nor can it, without treason to itself, either admit a peer, or tolerate a rival, or allow of an exception. The very existence of this Power would be compromised, were it to withdraw its claim to a single islet of the Southern Ocean. Peter's vicarship, if real, can have no other boundaries than those of the Church itself, which, in the end, is to embrace all lands that are visited by the sun.

With an Eastern Patriarch we might dispute his claim to rule this or that tract of country; and we might even wrench it from his jurisdiction, without aiming a thrust at his ecclesiastical life. In the end, he may himself peacefully cede the territory in question; and he may admit that his predecessors had trenched too far upon another man's field.

But there can be no room for any such mode of dealing with him who is either indeed the representative of Christ, on Earth; or, what the Church of England styles him—an impious tyrant.

Thus in fact does the Church, in her Homilies, denominate the bishop of Rome; and even with greater cogency of demonstration

does she declare him such when, in ministering the Oath of Supremacy to her priests, she spurns with horror that very pretension which is the fulcrum of the papal domination.

If the Pope neither hath, nor *ought to have*, any authority, either secular, or spiritual *within this Realm*, then he blasphemes Heaven in the first axiom of his sovereignty; and must be denounced as a pretender and impostor, in every land where he proclaims his titles.

This inference is not to be evaded—without the aid of some shuffling subterfuge; and the consequences thence resulting may, earlier than some would imagine, convulse the British empire, and throw the world into confusion. Two suppositions, the one of which ought always to be thought of as certain, and the other every day's events are showing to be probable, are sufficient to imply such a consequence;—the first is, that a British Sovereign thinks his throne, and sceptre, and his life itself to be less dear than the sacred obligations of the oath he has taken:—the other is, that the champions of Church Principles should, at some moment, believe themselves to be in a position (favoured by the course of events) for realizing their professed desires. In such a case an active endeavour to subject the English Church—and England, to the Papacy, must subvert the Throne, and reduce the empire to anarchy.

All ambiguity should be removed from this subject.—When a re-union with Rome—on the supposition that she may perhaps retract certain of her errors, and correct a few of her abuses, is spoken of as possible and desirable, it is unavoidably implied that those who express this desire have considered, and have assented to the preliminary, namely—a recognition of the universal vicarship of the successors of St. Peter. No one has ever imagined that Rome will yield *this* point. In other words then, these modern "fautors of Rome," or "popishly-given" persons, do steadily contemplate a compromise of their ordination oath. After having sworn that they reject the doctrine of the spiritual, as well as civil authority of the Pope, within these realms, they do not conceal their wish that a reconciliation between the daughter and the Mother—the first step toward which must be a dutiful recognition of the rightful authority of the latter,

not only in these, but in all other realms, should be brought about!

This one subject is assuming every day a more serious aspect, and may ere long lead to changes the end of which none would venture to foretel.

—At this moment the Theory of the universal vicarship of St. Peter's successor is agitating the convictions of a large proportion of those who have already admitted the several dogmas, together with the axioms, of the papal system—in a word, every thing papal, saving only that one harmonizing assumption which gives solidity and consistency to the entire structure. Popery, without the Papacy, is a pile of materials without cement, and which threaten every moment to crush those who cringe around it:—the Papacy is a structure of squared masonry, and it will stand, until "He who is mighty," shall shake it.

The feeling which has been obscurely indicated in many of the publications devoted to the promotion of "Anglo-Catholicism"—a feeling of unsettledness—of incompleteness—of blind onward impulse, has come forth from all embarrassments, with an attractive consistency, in the language of those who have lately seceded to the communion of Rome.

"Why are you become a Catholic?"—In one word, because, having already admitted every "Catholic verity"—that one excepted which affords the only real authority for all and each of them, we have at length seen the beauty and symmetry of that one, also, and joyfully submitting to it, find ourselves at rest:—our consciences relieved of a thousand disquietudes, and a path opened to us wherein we may walk without let or perplexity. We now can only wish the same peace to those of our late associates who are tormented beneath the spikes of the Thirty-nine Articles—crushed by the ponderous Protestantism of the "Book of Homilies," and torn by the deep-piercing thorn of their ordination vow.

This appears to be the substance of "a Letter to a Friend," which, from the beauty of its manner, its fervid simplicity, and the cogency of its reasoning, *as addressed to the holders of "Catholic views,"* cannot fail to produce a profound impression upon those of this description whose minds are ingenuous and susceptible.

It is very far from being true that the claims of the "Servus servorum Dei," to universal lordship, are likely *now* to be waived, or held in abeyance, as if questionable, or not easily to be sustained.—The very contrary is the fact; and it is a fact deserving of the most serious regard, as a prognostic of the events which impend, that at no period since the days of Gregory VII. has the doctrine of the papal universal supremacy been advanced with a more significant intensity, than at this moment. Toward this point all eyes will ere long be directed. The progress of opinion on this line is manifest.

"In joining myself to it (the Catholic Church) I felt that I should join myself to the Church of the whole earth—the Church of twelve centuries in England, and of eighteen centuries in the world." . . . "Especially to members of the Anglican Church she (the Catholic Church) says—You share, in common with myself, in this land (for you reach no further) the attacks of our common foe. This is for your honour. But think not you will escape where you are. The city of God is but one. You are too separate while you are rejecting my supreme earthly Head, my long-established discipline, my catholic order, to be a part of that city. Whatever may be your apparent unity, you are really separate. Your strength is thrown away in attempting to protect what is indefensible. But join me in repairing my fences against the foe; in reviving the courage of my true citizens, recovering ancient discipline, and re-animating decaying strength. Your return to me will be like health to the feeble, and strength to the faint; like an infusion of young blood into an ancient frame. You will be welcomed with gladness, and rejoiced over with singing, and the joy of earth will be re-echoed and sustained by that of heaven; the devout thanksgiving of the sixteenth Gregory for the recovery of the strayed sheep of his flock, will be taken up by the first of his name, the saint in heaven, for the renewal of that conversion of England, for which both he on earth (Gregory XVI.) so fervently prays, and he in heaven (Gregory the Great) so continually intercedes."*

These appeals, and the fair show of a beautiful theory which

* "Some answer to the Inquiry—Why are you become a Catholic? By Richard Waldo Sibthorp, B.D. &c."

accompanies them, will sink to the heart of many Anglo-Catholics; with what *effect* time must declare. Meanwhile, all should understand that the rightful authority of the chair of St. Peter, all the world over, and to which the Oath of Supremacy is opposed, is not the point at which the Church of Rome will now show any timidity, or seem inclined to listen to a compromise, or make concessions. Well she knows that it is to her, "the pillar and ground" of the hierarchical structure.

In proportion as the thorough investigations that characterise the present age, tend to expose, more and more, to contempt the simply historical assumptions on which the Paparchy has been made to rest, the THEORY of a universal vicarship, which soars far above all mere evidence of history, will be brought forward, and recommended, in strains of pathetic eloquence, such as those of the "Letter" we have just cited.

No matter, although it be a bare assumption that Peter, if ever at Rome, resided there any length of time; or that he presided over the Church there; or that he bequeathed his apostolic distinctions to his successor. No matter that Peter was himself wholly unconscious of his apostolic prerogatives, as bishop of the family of Adam; or that he disclaims any lord-like authority in the Church; or that he inculcates a temper the very opposite to that which has been the characteristic of his successors.—No matter that the early Church was absolutely ignorant of the supremacy of Rome, or of Peter; and that the novel claim, when advanced, was repelled with indignant reprobation.—

All this, and much more to the same effect, does not touch the splendid Theory of a Universal Church, and a visible Head—the representative of the Invisible, and who sways, in his name, a sceptre of absolute power over the bodies and souls of all mankind—through time, and through eternity!

The ground taken for the defence of such a Theory, is partly that of its abstract beauty, simplicity, and utility; and partly—we might say, chiefly, its alleged correspondence (as archetype) with the Aaronic economy; which, it is affirmed, was the shadow of "good things to come," under the brighter dispensation of the Roman Pontiffs!

It is this view of the Papacy, or rather Paparchy, which, as he

acknowledges, has converted the devout and imaginative writer of the "Letter," just above cited. He has well expressed the Theory in question; yet perhaps some may prefer the enunciation of it by the eloquent bishop of Meaux. A passage from the "Suite de la Religion"—(Discours, &c.) will sustain what we have to say on this subject, as it stands connected with the counter-doctrine of the English, and of every Protestant Church.

Et enfin que cette suite du peuple de Dieu fut claire aux moins clairvoyants, Dieu la rend sensible et palpable par des faits que personne ne peut ignorer s'il ne ferme volontairement les yeux à la vérité. Le Messie est attendu par les Hébreux; il vient, et il appelle les gentils comme il avait été prédit. Le peuple qui le reconnait comme venu est incorporé au peuple qui l'attendoit, sans qu'il y ait entre deux un seul moment d'interruption: ce peuple est répandu par toute la terre: les gentils ne cessent de s'y agréger; et cette église que Jésus-Christ a établie sur la pierre, malgré les efforts de l'enfer, n'a jamais été renversée.

Quelle consolation aux enfants de Dieu! mais quelle conviction de la vérité, quand ils voient que d'Innocent XI., qui remplit aujourd'hui si dignement le premier siège de l'église, on remonte sans interruption jusqu'à saint Pierre, établi par Jésus-Christ, prince des apôtres: d'où, en reprenant les pontifes qui ont servi sous la loi, on va jusqu'à Aaron et jusqu'à Moïse; de là jusqu'aux patriarches, et jusqu'à l'origine du monde! Quelle suite! quelle tradition! quel enchaînement merveilleux! Si notre esprit, naturellement incertain, et devenu par ses incertitudes le jouet de ses propres raisonnements, a besoin, dans les questions où il y va du salut, d'être fixé et déterminé par quelque autorité certaine; quelle plus grande autorité que celle de l'église catholique, qui réunit en elle-même toute l'autorité des siècles passés, et les anciennes traditions du genre humain jusqu'à sa première origine?

Ainsi la Société que Jésus-Christ attendu durant tous les siècles passés a enfin fondée sur la pierre, et où saint Pierre et ses successeurs doivent présider par ses ordres, se justifie elle-même par sa propre suite, et porte dans son éternelle durée le caractère de la main de Dieu.—*Seconde Partie*, c. xiii.

This magnificent idea of a universal dominion, visible, palpable, and therefore, necessarily secular in its means of support, and in

its faculties and functions;—and therefore also unavoidably offering the highest possible excitements to carnal ambition, is confessedly not to be traced in the Scriptures: nor was it surmised in the earliest times of Christianity. But the fact is well deserving of notice, that this lofty conception, and as conjoined with the dogma of the Supremacy of the Bishop of Rome, if it be indeed a Truth—and if a *truth*, it is the ONE TRUTH; for on the reception of it salvation depends—was revealed to the Church by the lips of the very men most interested in its establishment; and by men, individually, who, if they may be judged of like others, from the spirit and tendency of their writings, and the general tenor of their public course, were impelled by a boundless lust of power, and inflamed by spiritual arrogance, pride, and the love of wealth and worldly pomp.

Such were the men—let the Epistolæ Decretales Summorum Pontificum be searched in attestation of the fact—such were the men chosen by Heaven, from age to age, to announce to the Church the theory and doctrine of Peter's universal lordship! If this doctrine be indeed the "Word of the Lord," it is invariably the Simon Magus of each period who has been inspired to declare it!

In the long line of Pontiffs, single out the most rapacious, the most libidinous, the most ferocious, the most arrogant, and these will be the individuals of the Servi Servorum Dei to whom the Paparchy owes the heaviest debt of gratitude, for advancing, establishing, and extending the principle of this universal monarchy!

As this principle is the broad basis of the Romish Church, so is the denial of it the foundation of the Church of England. And how rightfully is this usurpation rejected!

It will not be beside our purpose to state the case at this moment, when the allegiance of so many of the clergy is tried, and actually shaken, on this very ground; and when more than a few appear to be retained in their position by secondary considerations only.

The strength of the theory of the Paparchy, as it is now expounded, and as it is so urgently pressed upon the convictions of those who have already admitted "catholic principles," appears

to consist entirely in an alleged continuity of plan, or a harmony, running on from the Jewish hierarchical system, into the Christian —that is to say, the Romish spiritual monarchy. From Tertullian and Cyprian, to Bossuet and Mr. Sibthorp, it is this ideal analogy that has captivated every ardent imagination.

For a moment then, let us pursue a comparison on the ground of this bold conception, between the Jewish Hierarchy, and the Christian (Romish) Hierarchy as to—

THE DOCUMENTARY CERTAINTY OF EACH:

THE SUPERNATURAL ATTESTATIONS TO WHICH EACH APPEALS:

THE INTERNAL CONSISTENCY OF EACH; and

THE RELATION OF EACH TO THE PROPHETIC SCRIPTURES.

It will readily be admitted, as well on the Romish, as on the Protestant side, that it could not be *more* important to an ancient Israelite to stand connected with the hierarchical theocracy under which he lived, than it is to ourselves, individually, to be found members of the true Church—or of the Romish Church, if indeed that be the true Church. An Israelite who should contumaciously resist or reject the lawful authority of the High Priest, would incur the undefined penalty of being "cut off from his people." But then, inevitable perdition is the consequence of an exclusion from the pale of the Romish Church;—or at least, if itself is to be the judge.*

There can therefore be no room to allege, That, if any ambiguity be found to attach to the pretensions of the Romish Church, as compared with the claims of the Aaronic, this inferiority in the proof, is only proportioned to the lower importance of the question at issue. Nothing surely can be more important than that on which salvation or perdition hinges!

But in truth the balance turns on the other side; for while, under the dim revelations of the Mosaic economy, it might not be clear that immortal ruin would be the consequence of this "cutting off" from the Jewish polity, no doubt whatever attaches to the final consequences of that excommunication under the weight of which the Church of Rome sends heretics and schismatics forward into eternity!

* Mr. Sibthorp's christian heart makes him a very sorry papist, when he alludes to the spiritual condition of his protestant friends.

The "Father of mercies" is surely not less "unwilling that any should perish," under the Gospel dispensation, than he was under that of Sinai: and therefore, if an argument from analogy is to be pressed upon us, in this instance, we may confidently assume it as certain, that the grounds of our submission to the Romish Pontiff—if such submission be indeed the condition of our salvation, will not be less solid, or certain, or conspicuous, than were the grounds of submission, on the part of every Israelite, to the Aaronic Pontiff. If we are to yield to this plea of analogy, and of "continuity," as it is now urged by Romanists, then assuredly we are warranted in supposing that, whereas God, merciful as he is, afforded to his ancient people the most ample, and the *highest possible* attestation of the divine authority of the Aaronic priesthood, he will not have demanded the submission of mankind in remote times and countries, to the authority of the Bishop of Rome, on the strength of an attestation which, when carefully examined, appears to be—the feeblest possible, and the slenderest possible, and the most ambiguous possible:—an attestation so feeble, so slender, so ambiguous, so obscure, and liable to exceptions and suspicions so grave, that it can be admitted only by those who will swallow it in the dark! But we bring these two bodies of DOCUMENTARY ATTESTATION into actual comparison.

The very nature of human affairs admits of no higher amount of documentary proof than that which assured every well taught Israelite of the certainty of his national religion, and of the divine origin of the hierarchy to which his submission was required. No people possessed a code of laws so manifestly authentic, or which had been so carefully transmitted, from age to age. We need not here insist upon a subject so well understood. No Israelite who asked himself the question—Why do I conform to the Church authorities, instituted by Moses, could reasonably entertain a doubt as to the reply.

Moreover the DOCUMENT itself by which his duty was clearly defined, in all its minutest details, was constantly read to him; and he was required to be familiarly conversant with all its provisions. Nothing was uncertain, or undefined, or discretionary, or open to perplexities, which might possibly become the occasion

of spiritual ruin to a conscientious Jew. No instances are on record of a schism or apostasy on the ground of any doubt as to the divine authority of the Aaronic priesthood. The people did indeed "go after their idols," but this was from defection of the heart, not from any ambiguity of the evidence. Never did a sincere Israelite anxiously doubt to what Church he ought to attach himself! Never was he referred to a tradition in itself barely probable; never required to bow to a self-asserted authority. No ancient Israelite could possibly have pursued a devious path, like that of Mr. Sibthorp—somewhile fully persuaded on the one side—then on the other; and anon retracing his own dubious steps.

How is it then with the pretensions of Rome, when claiming universal authority?

Christianity, like Judaism, has its DOCUMENTS;—and these also are well ascertained, and distinctly defined; and they profess to declare that truth, by the reception of which "all men may be saved."—And yet, concerning the universal authority of the Bishop of Rome, these writings say nothing! Make the utmost possible of what is therein implied concerning the primacy of Peter, this can avail nothing to the bishop of Rome, except by the aid of assumptions the most hazardous, and slenderly sustained, and which, at the very best, are only probably admissible!

How then can this argument from Analogy, bear out the vast demands of the Paparchy to the sovereignty of the world?

The entire body of the Hebrew canon was a continued assertion of the Aaronic authority, and an exposition of its particular bearings upon the faith, and practice, and worship of the people. But the Christian Canon is absolutely destitute of so many as three words which, by themselves, can be so interpreted as to afford any tinge of colour to the universal vicarship of the Romish Pontiff!

The Hebrew Canon was to be diligently read and expounded to the Jewish people. The Christian Canon is, with equal diligence, removed from the eye of the people by the Romish authority. In the one case none could be ignorant of the reason of the obedience that was claimed from him:—in the other case none can know it, by an appeal to any documentary evidence!

The most explicit documentary evidence vindicated the supre-

macy of Aaron's successors. For the priesthood was to "him, and his sons for ever;" and the Jewish Pontiff, if his title had been disputed, might appeal, at once, to an *undoubted Book*, and to an equally certain register, and say—"Search and see, if these things be not so."—The Roman Pontiff *himself* proclaims *himself* to be lord of the world; and when his champions are required to support his vast claims, they say—"Is not the IDEA of this universal dominion most magnificent?—is not this spiritual monarchy under which we live, worthy of the hand of God?"

Protestants are summoned to surrender their convictions to the force of an argument drawn from the striking analogy said to connect the chair of St. Peter with the throne of the Hebrew Pontiff. Let, then, a strict analogy be adhered to, in pursuing this comparison, and if so, then, and in order to place the successors of St. Peter precisely on a level with the successors of Aaron, as to their claims to the obedience of the people, respectively, these three things (besides others presently to be mentioned) ought to be found in the New Testament (which will be allowed to occupy the place of the Pentateuch in this argument.) These are—

1st. Direct, explicit proof, that upon Peter was conferred any supremacy over the other apostles, constituting him the head of the Christian World.

2d. An explicit and formal affirmation that this supremacy (if indeed exercised by Peter) descended to any successor.

3d. The same sort of proof, that the supremacy alleged to have been enjoyed by Peter, and bequeathed to some successor, did in fact descend to the bishop of Rome.

The equivalent of each of these heads of proof attached in full, to the Aaronic Supremacy:—but not one of them—conjectures apart, can be alleged in behalf of the papal domination. Here then we find a sovereignty immeasurably more vast than the Aaronic, in its consequences, and in its geographical extent, and in its duration, entirely destitute of that documentary evidence, which was afforded to the Aaronic in the amplest plenitude.—*As to documentary support*, the Aaronic hierarchy was a pyramid, resting on its base:—*as to documentary support*, the papal is a pyramid, trembling on its apex!

II. We will grant however that this lordship of the world might even dispense with documentary proof, if it could only make up the deficiency by fully corresponding with the Aaronic priesthood, in another principal point, namely—a continuous attestation, by the means of a prophetic and miraculous economy, running on abreast of its course, during some centuries, and until this species of proof had become, in its amount, sufficient to exclude all reasonable doubt.

We may, without presumption, trace the *general principle* of the divine government in dealing with the race of Abraham. So jealous of any human encroachments, or usurpations of the divine prerogatives, is the Supreme Ruler, that, when the religious submission of a people to *a visible and human authority* was demanded, it was not enough that an ample documentary warrant sustained that authority; for it was perpetually attested, through a course of ages, by a miraculous and prophetic economy. The Jewish people received, from time to time, *fresh* attestations of the divine authority of their national institute. These voices from Heaven continued, at intervals, to remind the people of their duty, during a period of a thousand years!

The constant combination of these two modes of proof—the miraculous and the prophetic, should be particularly noted. Either, separately, might have appeared sufficient; but, in condescension to the infirmity and perversity too, of human nature, what is less convincing in the one mode, is supported by what is more so in the other. If the one be more striking, the other is more sure; and when the two—God's "two witnesses," concur in attesting the same facts, incredulity is rendered inexcusable.

By this commingled evidence was the Mosaic institute sustained.—By the same blending of miracle and prediction was Christianity at first attested—and is still attested, in the fulfilment of its predictions.

In proportion to the defectiveness, or the absolute negation of original documentary proof, the continuous proof derived from miracles, and from fulfilled predictions, should be abundant, and irrefragable. To the Jewish people the documentary, and the continuous attestation, were both granted. To the Christian Church—if the Papacy be the Christian Church, the documentary

has been wholly denied. Will not then this comparative severity be compensated by a profusion of the other modes of proof? This we might safely anticipate. It remains to inquire in what way the Papacy meets this expectation.

So difficult is it to set limits to the combined powers of jugglery and credulity—of fraud and folly in effecting marvels, that some abatement from the value of miraculous narratives must, in most cases, be allowed. Not so with prophecies, which run onward through ample tracts of time. Hence it is, as we may well believe, that all True Religion has been sustained by these two species of proof in conjunction, as the two jambs of an arch support the structure, not separately, but together. An Institute, or an authority which boasts many miracles, should also be able to appeal to predictions, *uttered by itself*, in an earlier period of its existence, and now *visibly* in a course of fulfilment.

How then does he who says he is lord of the world make good his claim, when thus challenged to verify it by an appeal to fulfilled predictions? Miracles may be counterfeited; but not prophecies;—and so it is that the Church of Rome, while it can produce a hundred volumes of marvels, is as poor in prophecies, as it is in documentary proof! It can furnish in any required quantity, that which fraud may supply; but it does not attempt to produce even an atom of that which God alone can command;—namely—a knowledge of futurity!

It is now demanded of us to yield to an argument from analogy —we do so; and whither does analogy carry us, when, on the ground now mentioned, we carefully compare the Aaronic priesthood with the Papal?

But we must not forget how rich the Papacy is in miracles! richer far than Christianity itself! Fifty tomes, of the amplest dimensions, would not contain those narratives of a preternatural kind, which have been formally recognised as true, and which are appealed to as *evidence*, by the Church of Rome.

In relation to this vast body of miraculous—or pretended miraculous evidence, there has been error on both sides. Protestants, dismissing the whole as utterly despicable, and unworthy of the labour of refutation or exposure, have failed to pursue the consequences involved in this rejection of them. If

this mass of miracle be indeed spurious, far greater care should have been used than has been shown, in avoiding those dogmas *in support of which*, the system of Church frauds was commenced, and carried on.

On the other side, intelligent and well-informed Romanists, too well knowing that this mass would bear no analysis, have held themselves free to speak in vague terms of "the perpetuity of miracles," in their Church, without venturing, except in a very few instances, to descend to the details, or to meet the obvious objections to which these narratives are liable.

This oblique course has been pursued long enough; and several of the ablest of the champions of Romanism are now teaching us —though they do not mean it, to drive them in upon their defences. Conscious as they are, that the entire body of documentary and historical evidence tells against them, and that the diligence of modern inquirers is every day bringing forward some new proof of the corrupt origin of whatever is properly popish, these intelligent persons are betaking themselves to the most refined species of abstruse reasoning, and are (so strange are the revolutions of opinion) adopting the rationalistic manner, and are labouring most strenuously to commend the universal sovereignty of St. Peter's successors to our approval, in the method of abstruse reasoning! Far from demanding a blind faith, the Romish advocates, of the better class, are inviting our attention to a theory of Spiritual Despotism the grounds of which none but cultured minds can fully apprehend.

Let it be so then that, in these days of speculation, we are to become converts to Rome by means of a process of abstruse reasoning! But if we begin to reason, we must reason on.—Reason is applicable—and if indulged at all, it *will* apply itself, to *evidence*, as well as to *theories*. We must desist therefore from the practice of throwing a pall over the mass of Romish miracles, as we do over a corpse, which we desire to treat with all reverence; but by no means to look at.

Let these questions then be considered, and answered.

Is the body of Romish miracles a part and parcel of Romanism, or not?

—If not, then the pretensions of the Papacy stand divested of

every kind of direct attestation :—none documentary—none prophetic, and, at this rate—none miraculous!

But if these miracles are (and indeed they are) a principal constituent of Romanism, and if at this time Romanists have ceased to ask for a blind faith, and are themselves giving us lessons in close reasoning, then we *must* reason—and strictly too, in dealing with its body of Miracles.

Intelligent Romanists do not need to be told what the admitted rules and axioms of historical logic are :—they know how the well understood principles of human nature need to be considered and allowed for, in an argument of this kind :—they know what are those circumstances which reduce even the most solemn affirmations to the lowest value :—they know how solid are the grounds on which we reject all interested and unsupported testimony, and how safely we follow the native impulses of the moral sense, and of reason together, when we spurn, as unworthy of examination, what is offensively absurd, preposterous, childish, sottish, and impious.

Judged by these rules, and analyzed calmly, rigidly, and precisely as we should any testimony touching life and property, in a court of law, what must be the fate of the vast mass of wonder-tales which the Church of Rome has been used to glory in? How many of these legends will come forth from the furnace of inquiry as gold purified? One in a thousand may, perhaps, occasion a reasonable man a moment's perplexity; and he may even excuse himself from any endeavour to offer a satisfactory explication of it. Such instances of the "inexplicable" are not wanting in the round of human affairs. But as to the remainder—we should not say—*remainder;* as to the bulk—the whole mass, with here and there a difficult instance to be excepted—the mass is a heap of the most pitiable folly, and the most frightful impiety.

Romanists who will allow themselves to think—and they are now challenging *us* to think, and who will read the legends of their church, for themselves, must either maintain silence on this subject; or ingenuously confess those emotions of contempt, disgust, and horror, which such a perusal cannot but have excited. No mind that has not lost its moral and rational integrity can swallow

these narratives without unutterable loathing. It were an error to say they provoke *scepticism*; for scepticism relates to that which might possibly be regarded as credible.—These narratives provoke only indignation. How base, how infernally wicked were the perpetrators of these frauds! how degraded must have been their dupes and victims!

Grievous would be such a necessity, were we compelled to challenge conscientious Romanists to stand forth, as in the presence of Almighty God, and to declare their belief in the miracles of their church! We must stop our ears, and turn our eyes from the afflictive spectacle, if any whom we would fain respect, were seen to be coming forward, to risk an avowal like this!

The progress of opinion within all cultured communities will compel the Church of Rome, if not to disown its miracles, at least to observe silence in regard to them.

But now, if these miracles are spurious—or if they must no longer be appealed to as proofs of the Divine Presence with the Romish Church, then, the Paparchy, as compared with the Aaronic priesthood, is confessed to be destitute of *every species* of direct attestation!

III. If, in the divine intention, the papal spiritual sovereignty over the race of Adam be the *continuation* of the Aaronic spiritual sovereignty over the race of Abraham, then we may reasonably expect to find, in the one, not less than in the other, a rule of consistency running on from age to age:—in other words, a uniformity of direction, or of *tendency*:—a chronological coherence, and harmony, connecting each later epoch, with the commencement of the institution.

This point of comparison deserves peculiar attention. In running a parallel between the two hierarchies, we shall exclude from our account, on both sides, all those instances of aberration, and of individual delinquency, which are attributable rather to the infirmity and corruption of human nature, than to the proper influence of the system in question. There were faithless and unworthy High Priests; there have been (alas how many!) profligate Pontiffs. But we do not inquire concerning these instances, on either side:—the equipoise therefore is not disturbed by them, either way. We fix our eye strictly upon what each system, in

itself, has been, and what it has evolved, in the exercise of its proper functions;—upon what has been recognised—authenticated—approved—promoted, by the power itself, when acting in the manner most congenial to it.

Now we say that, whereas the *precession* of the one scheme of spiritual government, through the field of time, has exhibited a high uniformity of intention, the progress of the other displays the utmost contrariety of purpose, and of tendency.

This affirmation is easily established. Let it then be assumed that the mutability attaching to whatever is human may be calculated upon as likely to affect any two given systems, or institutions, to a nearly similar amount, in eras of equal duration. As thus—that the influences of a four or five hundred years will be as distinctly marked in one scheme or institute, as in another—cæteris paribus; or if both are alike stable in themselves.

On this supposition (the absolute correctness of which does not affect our conclusion) we now apply some equal measures of time to the Aaronic, and to the papal pontificates.

Take then the interval from the consecration of Aaron, beneath the brow of Sinai, to the setting up of the Tabernacle worship by David at Jerusalem, or somewhat later—to the close of his reign. We fix upon this period because, in the Book of Psalms, we are furnished with ample means for ascertaining what the Israelitish theosophy and theopathy had actually become, after the Mosaic economy had run on through a course of four hundred and forty, or fifty years.

The Psalms of David, most of which were in fact used, from the moment of their composition, as the Liturgy of that worship which the Aaronic priesthood conducted, may very well be appealed to as proof of that harmony of theological principles, and of that unbroken continuity of purpose which—thus far, connected the earlier with the later period of the Institution. Need we say that the theology of the Psalms is as pure and bright as that which issued from the fiery summit of Sinai? No element of religious corruption had, in the lapse of these years, affected it:—no tendency did it exhibit toward the specious illusions of polytheistic worship:—the One Living and True God, whose honour had been so awfully asserted in the first, second and third com-

mandments, was still the only and unrivalled object of religious regard to those who worshipped around the Tabernacle at Jerusalem, in the language, and in the spirit of David. No 'shadow of turning' can be detected in these compositions, from that which was the GREAT INTENTION of the Mosaic Institute. One might say that the fires of Sinai, throwing their light forward through the interval of ages, showed a true keeping of time by the Shadow of Zion. God was still the refuge and strength of his people, as in the wilderness, so in the chosen city.

We now assume this same interval of time, namely, about four hundred and fifty years, and taking, as our starting point, the year in which (according to papal authorities) St. Peter occupied the pontifical chair at Rome, we are brought down to the early years of the sixth century.

Must we then collate the Christianity of the two epistles of Peter, with that of Peter's representatives at the commencement of the sixth century? How vast is the dissimilarity! Who shall measure it?

At this time, not only had a frightful corruption of manners affected the christianized community throughout the West; and not merely were the clergy generally sunk into a condition of shameless debauchery, but the purity and simplicity of christian worship had given way to a system of polytheism and idolatry, not less gross than that of the obsolete paganism. The evidence to this effect is voluminous and incontrovertible: nor need it here be adduced.

One point of this comparison is however peculiarly significant in relation to the question at issue between the Church of England and the Paparchy.—

—The Aaronic hierarchy was a purely religious institution, and, as a *national* religion, it included the teaching of youth, and the interpretation of that Law of which the priests were the guardians. Its functions and its privileges were punctiliously defined. Under the monarchy, the hierarchy kept its place of spiritual ministration, and of secular subordination. The Jewish kings—and with the divine approval very distinctly expressed, held and employed a species of supremacy, even in ecclesiastical affairs, which was very nearly analogous to that allowed in protestant countries, to princes,

and which the sovereigns of England constitutionally exercise. Until that later period, when the prophetic function had long been withdrawn, and when the Jewish constitution had sustained shocks on all sides, we hear nothing of the invasion of secular powers by the pontiffs.

Is it not amazing then that Romanists should urge upon us the claims of the Paparchy, on the ground of its identity in principle with the Aaronic hierarchy, when *this* was a religious institution, modestly observant of its subordinate place in the social system, and mindful of its proper functions;—*that*, from the earliest times, 'the mover of rebellion against princes'—the usurper of secular powers, and the impudent tyrant of kings! No designation can mark this arrogant domination so clearly as does that of the apocalyptic prediction—it 'ruleth over the kings of the earth.'

It is not the overreaching cupidity of this or that ambitious pontiff, that we are speaking of; but the invariable policy of the papal government, steadily pursued from the fourth century down to the time when, by the renovation of the European community, the people and their princes agreed in driving this usurpation in upon its centre.

If we take the measure of time above mentioned, and mark it off upon the scale of pontifical history, it brings us to the very period when the popes, from Symmachus, Hormisdas, and their immediate successors, were taking the boldest steps to establish their claim to a universal lordship, and to render themselves, as secular princes, independent of the eastern emperors, and of the kings of the west. No contrast can be more striking, or more instructive, than that which is presented when we compare the temper and political position of the successors of Aaron, in the sixth century of *Jewish* history, with that of the successors of St. Peter in the sixth century of *Christian* history.—The one reminds us of the clergy of a protestant state; the other is like nothing else upon earth; and we can think of it only as the power that should 'do according to his will, and exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and speak marvellous things against the God of gods.'

The 'first of the pontiffs'—St. Peter, while he forbids his suc-

cessors to speak and act, even within their own province, as 'lords over God's heritage,' enjoins *all* to 'submit themselves' to the secular powers, supreme and subordinate. But his successors of the sixth century defy emperors and kings—deny tribute—summon ecclesiastical and secular persons to their tribunal from the remotest regions; and assert a supremacy to which none might dare to set any limits. How fares it then with the alleged 'analogy' between the Aaronic and the papal hierarchies? The one, in the course of five hundred years, is not found to have advanced a single step beyond the line which at first marked its limits within the social economy.—The other, in the same lapse of time, had stalked abroad with a Nebuchadnezzar's lust of power, trampling upon thrones—or attempting to do so, and giving to the world a high example of every secular passion that is condemned by the gospel—rapacity, cupidity, love of worldly pomp, sensuality, contempt of truth and justice, and the darkest and most sanguinary rancour toward opponents!

Long before the time of which we are now speaking, the bishops of Rome had become noted, in all the world, as the most sumptuous and luxurious, as well as the most arrogant of princes. Protestants are required to submit themselves to the papacy, because it is the scheme that was adumbrated by the Israelitish hierarchy.—But is it so indeed? We examine the Israelitish polity, ecclesiastical and secular, as it existed in its highest condition of prosperity, at the moment of the dedication of the Temple, and the adjustment of its functions, under the direction of Solomon—Solomon, the wisest of kings, and who at that time enjoyed the favour of God as a prophet, as well as monarch. We ask then if the ancient hierarchy, at that bright era, resembled, in any one point, that of the Romish Church? It offers a perfect contrast; and in fact finds its resemblance no where so well as within a protestant country, and in the constitutions of an Established Church.

The papal era, which is correspondent with that of Solomon—in pursuing our present parallel, is that of the middle period of Justinian's reign, when the universal supremacy of St. Peter's successors having received the warrant it wanted, from the Imperial hand, the pontiffs glutted their boundless ambition, and satiated

their pride, by lording it over potentates and dignitaries—eastern as well as western. The Decretal letters—the Epistles to refractory bishops or princes—the style and language of the popes of those times in opening councils, and the terms in which they allowed themselves to be addressed by obsequious suitors, are before us. A vast mass of these papal documents is now extant—and is under our eyes—and may readily be cited. Romanists are not ignorant of these ancient monuments of their church; and they may profess to find in them nothing unbefitting the majesty of that dominion which embraces earth and heaven, time and eternity. Be it so—for this is not our immediate subject. But will conscientious men dare to affirm that the tranquil humility of the Israelitish priesthood, in its best days—the times of Solomon (who was head of Church and State) can be considered as prefiguring pontifical supremacy, in the times of Justinian? The papal scheme and style of spiritual despotism, Romanists may admire, as much as they please, and they may think it holier and more beneficial than the Aaronic. But we cannot permit them to push forward the one as if it were the archetype of the other! Let us first believe transubstantiation.

The very same absolute contrast in principle, temper, and tendency, is presented by taking *any* corresponding dates, in the chronology of the two systems: and it might be well to exhibit, in parallel columns, these two systems of spiritual polity, during a course of twelve centuries.

The contrast is maintained until we come down to a period of Jewish history, long posterior to the close of the prophetic dispensation, and when the people, left to the free development of the perverse impulses of human nature, exhibited, in their ecclesiastical system, a pattern, although on a small scale, of that which the papacy was to display on the wide field of the world.—The Jewish church did at length resemble (faintly even then) the papal, when it reached the condition in which it met the vehement rebukes of our Lord, in whose denunciations of the traditional folly and impiety of 'priests and lawyers,' we hear his rebuke—uttered by anticipation, of popes, cardinals, and doctors.

Let it then be shown—if it may be shown, except by vague assertions, meaning nothing, that the constitutional powers exer-

cised by the high-priests, and the house of Aaron, resembled *in any thing* the domination of popes, and cardinals, and legates, and vicars apostolic.

The one was most exactly defined, as well in its rights, as in its duties.—The other, by its principle, is undefined, and boundless. The one, while fulfilling its purely spiritual functions, yielded obedience to the Prince.—The other, with every gesture of that base insolence in which beggars-born are adepts, insulted, threatened, and trampled upon emperors and kings. The one, through a long course of ages, and even amidst the defections of kings and people, held to the worship of the True God.—The other, from an early period of its history, has sustained and extended its power over mankind by promoting flagrant idolatry.

Such is that continuity and harmony which we are told connects the line of the Romish Pontiffs with that of the Jewish High Priests!

IV. We have yet to consider the two Hierarchies as they stand related, severally, to the prophetic Scriptures.

We have seen, that the bishop of Rome, in demanding the submission of every child of Adam, the wide world over, can produce not one syllable of documentary evidence, in support of so vast a pretension. We have seen, that the miraculous attestations to which he appeals for supplying the want of documentary credentials, tend only, if examined, to cover him with shame: and we have further seen, That the theory which his champions now so strenuously insist upon, instead of presenting a harmony, offers in fact a most violent contrast.

There remains however one mode of attestation which, if it could be advanced, might be allowed to supersede every other. Do we find then, in the prophetic Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the bright anticipation of this Pontifical, universal empire? Well may we expect to find so vast an object, if chief in the divine intention and foreknowledge, to be clearly prefigured on the prophetic page—But is it so? The answer to this question may be brought within very narrow limits, by the method of exhaustions, as follows:—

1. We confine ourselves to the New Testament, because it is there that well-defined predictions concerning the futurity of the

Christian Church are to be looked for: and it must be by the aid of these that any more ancient prophecies will be expounded.

2. The predictive or prophetic portions of the New Testament are few, and may easily be reviewed, so far as our present purpose is concerned. Our Lord's discourses on two or three occasions—a passage or two in the Acts—two or three passages in the Epistles of Paul, two or three in those of Peter, and the book of the Apocalypse, comprise all that need be referred to.

3. If the Papacy be Christ's true Church, and if it form a subject of prophecy, it must of course be looked for where that which is *approved* is spoken of: not among things reprobated and denounced as wicked.

These things premised, and it being presumed also, that those who read their Bibles will be able at once to verify our assertions, in which indeed nothing is included that admits of a question, we then say that—

Whatever happy triumphs may in the end be enjoyed by the Church *on earth*, our Lord, in his prophetic discourses, speaks of the condition of his true followers—his Church, as that of suffering and depression. Never should we gather from these intimations the fact that, after a century or two of suffering, his Church, under the guardianship of his universal vicar, should be glorified with all the customary circumstances of secular power and pomp; or that this vicar should dispose of thrones, and be mightier than the mightiest of earthly gods.

Is the Papacy anywhere foreshown, as Christ's true Church, in those predictions which the Evangelists have recorded? Nothing of the sort can be pretended.

If Peter's vicarship, as exercised by the bishops of Rome, be indeed the fulfilment of the divine intention toward the Church, it is natural to suppose that some glimpse of this coming glory should enliven the two epistles in which he has digested the doctrine proclaimed by him in his preaching. But Peter, like his Master, prepares the minds of Christians for suffering, not for bearing rule in the world. In forbidding lordly power to the ministers of the Church, he promises them 'a crown of glory that fadeth not away,' to be bestowed 'when the chief Shepherd shall appear;'—but not either a triple crown, or a cardinal's hat. He

predicts the appearance of false prophets—men practised in every art of rapacity and deceit, and wallowing in sensualities. We are not here affirming that these predictions have been signally fulfilled in the lives and conduct of the series of Roman pontiffs (and yet this is distinctly affirmed by the Church of England) we only say that Peter, 'the first of the pontiffs,' as Romanists will have him to be, and endowed as he was with the spirit of prophecy, does not foretell the universal lordship of his successors.—One would indeed think him wholly unconscious of any such vast prerogatives, as belonging either to himself, or to any but to Him to whom he ascribes 'glory both now and for ever.'

The apostle Jude follows in the same strain; nor gives any intimation of the 'glory' so soon to be revealed, in the person of the vicar of Christ. The apostle James also speaks as if it would be the lot of Christians rather to suffer among the poor, than to rule with princes; but he does not afford what we are in search of; nor does—

The beloved disciple in his 'Catholic' Epistles. Antichrists, indeed, there were and should be; but the chair of St. Peter, as the rock of the Church, he neither names nor foresees.

The writings of Paul, whose province was the Gentile Church, contain predictions which include extensive tracts of time; and yet, neither in these, nor in the epistle to the Hebrews, the principal subject of which would naturally have led him to introduce so bright a theme, does he appear conscious of that 'succession of pontiffs,' which was to realize, on so vast a scale, the feeble type of the Aaronic hierarchy.

Those two signal predictions, of which, as we suppose, no Romanist needs to be reminded, we here refer to, only to ask whether the future glory of the 'true Church'—the Church of Rome—is therein discoverable? If not, then St. Paul does not, any more than the other apostles, foresee or foretell the universal vicarship of the Pontiffs. The Romish spiritual monarchy is not embraced, as we see, in any one of those prophecies concerning the Church, which are extant in the Gospels, or the Epistles. Thus far, therefore, the pretensions of the bishop of Rome stand unsustained by any particle of prophetic evidence.

What, then, must be said of that mass of evidence which is

afforded by the only book of the New Testament canon that is altogether prophetic, and which, beyond question, embraces the entire tract of time, from the moment when it was given, to that of the consummation of the now-current order of the human system?

The course of events foretold in the Apocalypse is by all expositors admitted to be that particular series of the revolutions of human affairs which touches immediately the condition of the Church—the body of Christ's faithful people—during the lapse of ages. The Church—the company of the 'servants of God,' is mentioned again and again in this scheme of prophecy. It might therefore seem a very easy question to answer, whether this company of the servants of God, when thus alluded to, either incidentally, or more explicitly, is described in such terms as could well consist with the supposition that the Church of Rome, headed by the series of Pontiffs, is thereby intended and prefigured? Will Romanists, with the history of the papacy before them, venture to affirm that they find their sovereign pontiffs and their cardinals in those expressions which represent the 'saints,' and the 'faithful witnesses' of Christ, as suffering under some sanguinary despotism, during the lapse of more than twelve centuries?

But let us cease to inquire what Romanists, in such an exigence, may dare to affirm or to deny. A question of far more moment presses itself upon the anxious meditations of Christian men, who, at this time, are watching the course of events. It is this—Whether the Episcopal Church of England is about to disown its part in the Reformation, and to rush to its ruin with apostate Rome?

Upon the determination of this question an irrefragable argument, drawn from the Apocalypse, most distinctly bears. Prophecy, which was given for the confirmation of the truth of the Scriptures, has been given also (this is allowed) for the purpose of animating the hopes of God's true servants, while waiting for its fulfilment; and also for their caution in seasons of peculiar trial, and at moments when, if not thus forewarned, they too might be seduced, and led away, to follow 'the error of the wicked.'

The present moment is eminently such a season of seduction and

of peril. Very many of the ministers of a Protestant Church—a Church accounted the pillar of the Reformation, have already loosened themselves from every tie of sympathy with the Reformers;—already have they assented to the body of superstitions inherited by the Romish from the Nicene Church;—they have even gone so far as to follow Rome, where the testimony of antiquity is against her; and have allied themselves, not to the fourth, but to the twelfth century: they have moreover acknowledged those hierarchical principles, which render their continued separation from the communion of Rome a flagrant inconsistency. As the consequence of this defection from Protestantism, they court the smiles of Rome, and break away, with expressions of horror, and with mouths full of cursing and bitterness, from the fellowship of all Protestants—not episcopal:—and at the very moment while they are making episcopacy their idol, they use it, in the persons of actual bishops, as idolaters are wont to use a god who will not bide their bidding!

Those who have advanced to these lengths, will doubtless find it easy to read the Apocalypse as Romanists read it, and not find therein the Chief Personage of that awful exhibition of cruelty, idolatry, and blasphemy.

The Apocalypse will now divide the professedly Christian body, while it rescues those who are to be rescued from 'the plagues' appointed for the apostate Church. These, and many such stand at this moment in the utmost peril, will read this prophetic book anew, and learn wisdom while yet there is time to step back from the precipice. But among those who *might* thus have been saved, some probably will fail of reaping so great a benefit, from the mere circumstance of their possessing a very slender and insufficient knowledge of the history of the Papacy. These—and they are imaginative young men, generally, are thrown into the society of Romish priests, of the *English breed;* or, when abroad, the fair face of the haggard abomination is carefully shown to them. They have read Protestant histories of Popery, which they are easily induced to reject as 'intemperate exaggerations.' Moreover, some of these hopeful catechumens have been directed to this and that bright page of christian antiquity, as if it were a sample of the mass!

But is it many of them that can profess to have made themselves even moderately well acquainted with the Nicene Fathers, or to have perused the history of the Papacy, *where it is to be found*—in the ponderous tomes of its own Records—the Decretal Epistles of Popes—the Acts of Councils—the contemporaneous Romanist literature? Few, it is to be feared, have become qualified, by a full and *direct* knowledge of the subject, for such a perusal of the Apocalypse, as would now SAVE THEM FROM ROME.

We sum up this argument, as follows—

That universal dominion (whether secular or spiritual) of the bishops of Rome, against which the Church of England so solemnly protests, and toward which the adherents of 'Church Principles' are now almost irresistibly driven, is recommended as 'a magnificent idea,' realizing, on a great scale, what was adumbrated by the Aaronic hierarchy, on a small scale.

But when the two systems come to be strictly compared—1st. the papal domination is found to be wholly destitute of documentary warrant; whereas the Aaronic rested on the broadest basis of scriptural authority.

2dly. The Aaronic received an often-renewed attestation, by miracles and fulfilled prophecies. But the papal, without pretending to the latter, boasts of the former only to its greater shame;—its miracles being impudent and impious frauds, of which no one who examines them can doubt.

3dly. The one Priesthood retained its theological integrity, even amid the defections of princes and people: the other has made itself the patron of polytheism and idolatry in their most debasing forms.

4thly. The one (as already said) was sustained by predictions; the other is denounced by them, with an irrefragable precision, and copiousness of description.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND—ALONG WITH THE FATHERS, ASSERTS THE SOLE AUTHORITY OF THE CANONICAL SCRIPTURES.

We have now to show, and it may be done with ease and certainty, that the impious doctrine of Rome, revived by Anglo-Catholics, concerning the authority of Tradition and the Church, is utterly condemned by the Church of England, which, on this fundamental principle, perfectly agrees with the Fathers, even down to a late period.

Such doctrines as the following—That Scripture and Tradition are the joint source of Christian Truth, and constitute a joint authority in matters of Faith or discipline—That, in any instance of debate, it is the Church, and its councils, and its traditions which determines the interpretation to be put upon Scripture—That the people are to receive their religion from the Church and the priest, without presuming to compare this teaching with the Scriptures; and, That the perusal of Scripture by the laity is dangerous, and of ill tendency; or at best useless: these doctrines, and the like, which the Formularies of the Church of England reject, as impious and pernicious, are derived—from what sources? not from that 'Antiquity' which Tractarian writers have professed to follow with so much reverence; but from Rome, and from Rome in the very darkest hours of its despotism. It is from the lips of Rome, at moments when its hands have reeked with blood, that these writers have received the fundamental dogma of their system—and they have so received it, notwithstanding the protest of the Church to which they belong, and the verdict of all antiquity:—and they have done this while themselves professing to be the restorers of Antiquity, and the opponents of Rome!

This we shall conclusively prove.

The question concerning the Rule of Faith, or the actual source of our belief, and the standard of duty, must be the preliminary of every discussion concerning religious truth, worship, discipline, or moral conduct.

The Church of England gives that prominence to this subject which is clearly its due, and expresses her mind thereupon with the highest explicitness, and force of language. Her decision in this point may perhaps be declared not to be binding; but at least it cannot be misunderstood.

It is essential to my present purpose to cite passages which must be familiar to many of my readers; and especially that the coincidence between these passages and some to be adduced from the Fathers, may be distinctly observed, as well as their utter contrariety, in spirit and terms, to Romanist and Tractarian doctrine, on the very same point.

We here ask no questions as to the time when certain formularies were issued; or as to the persons by whom they were drawn up. We take what we find, as the now-authorized expression of Church-of-England doctrine, and we are willing even to appeal to these documents as we might to the recognised 'Confession' of any Church which does not rigidly demand a conformity of opinion from its members and ministers. How far clergymen may be bound by the terms we quote, we do not know, and do not think it our business to inquire.

Our Proposition is—

That the Church of England, so far as her mind may be learned from her Formularies, is A PROTESTANT CHURCH, and by its first principles opposed to Romanism, and to Anglo-catholicism, as now professed; and that she is in perfect accordance, as to the sole authority of Scripture, with—ALL THE FATHERS, as well as with other protestant Churches.

The Book of Homilies thus opens—(I take the liberty to distinguish typographically, those sentences, or single phrases which will be particularly the points of comparison with citations from other sources.)

"Considering how necessary it is that the word of God, which is the ONLY FOOD OF THE SOUL, and that most excellent light that we must walk by, in this our most dangerous pilgrimage, should at all convenient times be preached unto the people, that *thereby* they may both learn their duty towards God, their Prince, and their neighbours, according to the mind of the Holy Ghost, expressed in the Scriptures; and also to avoid the manifold

enormities which heretofore by false doctrines have crept into the Church of God;" &c.

The commendation of Holy Scripture is the subject deemed of prime importance by the Church; and therefore, with this momentous subject these sermons commence; and pithily is the first of them entitled 'a Fruitful Exhortation to the Reading and Knowledge of Holy Scripture.'

"Let us diligently search for the well of life in the books of the New and Old Testament, and not run to the stinking puddles of men's traditions, devised by men's imagination for our justification and salvation. For in Holy Scripture IS FULLY CONTAINED what we ought to do, and what to eschew, what to believe and what to love, and what to look for at God's hands at length."

Such is the doctrine of the English Church—uniformly, and on every occasion expressed; and in most instances, as in this, conjoined with an energetic vituperative reference to the intermixture of Traditions and Scripture. And this too, as we shall see, is the doctrine of the ancient Church—even amid its many errors. Liable to no exception (as in other cases hereafter to be noted) is the appeal to that 'great clerk and godly preacher St. John Chrysostom' in commendation of Holy Scripture, as sufficient for men's salvation. This commendation is not qualified, either in the Homilies, or in the Fathers, to whom reference is made, nor is it rendered nugatory or ambiguous, by a single word of reserve, in favour of the proximate authority of the Church, or of the parallel, or paramount authority of Tradition. The exhortation is purely Protestant, as well in its purport, as in its phraseology.

In the second Part of this Sermon a personal knowledge of the Scriptures is urged upon all Christians, on the mere ground of their profession, as such. Further on, the very objections so often urged against the popular study of the Bible are met, and answered; and this in the most explicitly protestant style. So far from its being true that the reading of Scripture by private persons tends to breed errors, it is said that—'Ignorance of God's word is the cause of all error, as Christ himself affirmed to the Sadducees, saying that they erred because they knew not the Scripture.'—'And if you be afraid to fall into error by reading of Holy Scripture, I shall show you how you may read it without danger

of error.'—The directions that follow contain no hint of the necessity of the Church's teaching :—they turn altogether upon the temper of the individual reader, and then conclude.—

"Therefore the humble man may search any truth boldly in the Scripture, without any danger of error; and if he be ignorant, he ought the more to read and to search Holy Scripture, to bring him out of ignorance. I say not nay, but a man may profit by only hearing; but he may much more profit with both hearing and reading."

The vulgar objection that the perusal of Scripture is 'meet only for clerks and learned men' is disposed of in the mode that is characteristic of the most thoroughly protestant of the protestant divines.

"Surely none be enemies to the reading of God's word, but such as either be so ignorant, that they know not how wholesome a thing it is; or else be so sick, that they hate the most comfortable medicine, that should heal them; or so ungodly that they would wish the people still to continue in blindness or ignorance of God."

We are *now* told, that the Church, not Scripture, is the medium of so much religious knowledge as the mass of the people should receive.—We ask, What Church? not the Church of England;—for she, in her very addresses to the people, affirms the contrary; and declares that the several devices whereby it has, at different times, been attempted to rend the Bible from the people's hands, are of the Devil. Does the following passage breathe the spirit of certain Tract writers?

"Wherefore Satan, our old enemy, seeing the Scriptures to be THE VERY MEAN and right way to bring the people to the true knowledge of God, and that Christian religion is greatly furthered by diligent hearing and reading of them, he also perceiving what an hindrance and let they be to him, and his kingdom, doth what he can to drive the reading of them out of God's Church . . . . pretending most untruly that the much hearing and reading of God's word, is an occasion of heresy, and carnal liberty, and the overthrow of all good order in all well ordered commonweals. . . Shall we Christian men, think to learn the knowledge of God and of ourselves in any earthly man's work or writing, sooner or better

than in the Holy Scriptures, written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost?"—*Information of certain places of Scripture.*

There is an energetic consistency running through the Formularies of the Church on this momentous subject—the sufficiency, the sole authority, and the intelligibleness of Scripture; nor can so much as a single line be produced in support of the 'joint authority of Tradition,' or of the office of the Church, as the immediate source of doctrine. These notions, the offspring and expression of the modern Romish Despotism, and now so eagerly promoted by the Tract writers, are not only not whispered as a principle held in reserve; but they are most pointedly excluded. This is well nigh acknowledged by those who confess themselves to fret and chafe under the Protestant thraldom of the Thirty-Nine Articles.

These Articles, which "do contain the true Doctrine of the Church of England, agreeable to God's word," and which are to be submitted to "in the plain and full meaning thereof," and upon which "no man may put his own sense or comment," but must "take in the literal and grammatical sense"—these Articles leave no footing for those opinions upon the establishment of which the Tract writers, during ten years, have spent their utmost endeavours.

Is there one of the Protestant communions of Europe that has expressed the great Protestant Principle with a more concise determination than has the Church of England in her Articles?

"Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that," &c.

The Three Creeds "ought to be thoroughly received and believed," not because they are of high antiquity, and have received the sanction of the ancient Church; but for that sole reason which it becomes a Protestant Church to advance; namely, because "they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture."

This would have been the proper place (Art. VIII.) for subjoining the dogma of the joint, or overruling authority of Tradition. But that dogma is no element of the teaching of the Church of England. Instead of holding that infallibility of the Church visible, which must be affirmed (and which is affirmed) in support of her alleged absolute authority, by the Church of Rome, the

Church of England specifies, in instances, the fallaciousness of any such pretension. "As the Church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch, have erred, so also the Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith," and so have "General Councils erred;" nor are their decisions worthy of regard further than they may appear consonant with Holy Scripture.

The Church's own authority ranges within the same constant limitation; and she professes herself "a witness and a keeper," not of religious truth in the abstract, as if it were confided to her *discretion;* but simply of—"Holy Writ." The Church guards the Inspired Books, and hands them down, as she received them; and as the sole and sovereign Rule of Faith and Practice.

This absolute supremacy of Scripture—the true Protestant principle, recurs implicitly, or explicitly, in each of the Articles, and is affirmed with peculiar significance in the Thirty-fourth; where it is most carefully placed in apposition with those local and temporary arrangements termed—"traditions and ceremonies," which may lawfully vary according to the circumstances and discretion of particular churches, to suit "the diversities of countries, times, and men's manners."—Yet never so adapted to *these,* as to contradict "God's word."

In this instance the phrase, "traditions and ceremonies," clearly indicates what is meant—namely, those religious usages, sanctioned by time, which may be termed the *costume* of national churches. These traditions are things various and variable: and are not a fixed system, handed down from the ancient church.—*See the Preface to the Prayer Book.*

But if there be any one portion of the Formularies of a church that is more solemn, or more certainly expressive of its mind than other portions, it must be that which prescribes the mode of ordaining its ministers. To these forms an appeal may most conclusively be made, in any question, concerning what is held to be *the source of authority* in the Church, or what those principles are which regulate the exercise of that authority.

The extravagance of modern theories of clerical power, have made it difficult to read the Ordination and Consecration Services in their own majestic simplicity, and apart from the false interpretation

that has been put upon them. These forms may perhaps contain matter of exception; but were it possible to dispel from our minds all recollection of those arrogant and unscriptural expositions of their meaning which have at different eras been forced upon language so blameless (for the most part) they would stand approved in the view of every calm mind.

But whether or not we assent to certain principles of ecclesiastical polity, which constitute the basis of these forms, it must surely be admitted that, in their drift and general purport, they attribute, not merely high honour, but supreme and unrivalled authority to the Inspired Writings. Not a syllable do they contain of 'Church Principles,' or of the joint authority of Tradition (meaning its paramount authority) or of the submission alleged to be due to antiquity, or of the apostolic succession, as expounded by the divines of the age of the Stuarts, and now by the modern champions of the same doctrine.

Negatively and positively these Offices are altogether PROTESTANT; and, by several provisions of the most solemn kind, they should be found sufficient for excluding from the Ministry of the Church whoever contemplates, as desirable, a return to the communion of Rome;—and whoever intends to conform his teaching to the mind and authority of Antiquity;—and whoever is not cordially affected toward the Protestant principle of recommending the study of Holy Scripture to the mass of the people.

The episcopal charge—"You have heard, Brethren"—speaks of no other dignity, attaching to the office of Priest, beyond that which may be gathered from the "Lessons taken out of the Gospel, and the writings of the Apostles;"—unless it were assumed that, in the "private examination" there referred to, some doctrine has been whispered, some esoteric principle of government inculcated, of which the Church says nothing in her published Formularies.—Is it then pretended that the Church intends her ministers to be secretly schooled in maxims which she does not choose to avow, and of which the people can know nothing? If not, then the ministerial powers, as defined by Scripture, and as admitted by all Protestant communions, include none of those elements of pride and despotism upon which hierarchical tyranny is rested.

"And seeing that you cannot *by any other means*, compass the doing of so weighty a work, pertaining to the salvation of man, but with doctrine and exhortation taken out of the Holy Scriptures, and with a life agreeable to the same; consider how studious ye ought to be in reading and learning the Scriptures, and in framing the manners both of yourselves, and of them that specially pertain unto you, according to the rule of the same Scriptures: . . . . and that you will continually pray . . . . that by daily reading and weighing of the Scriptures, ye may wax riper and stronger in your ministry, and that ye may so endeavour yourselves, from time to time, to sanctify the lives of you and yours, and to fashion them after the Rule and Doctrine of Christ, that ye may be wholesome and godly examples and patterns for the people to follow."—*The ordering of Priests.*

In the body of this solemn charge should have been inserted—*had that been indeed the mind of the Church*, an injunction to interpret Scripture always in conformity with the decisions of Antiquity—the traditions handed down from 'the first six centuries.' But not a particle indicates an adherence to any such extra-Scriptural Rule. It is not therefore the Rule of the English Church; and those whose Ordination has been thence derived, admit such a rule in defiance of their early protestations. Are the people to suppose that words, such as the following, may be contemned by those who are to teach them *morality?*

"*The Bishop.*

"Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain *sufficiently* all Doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ? and are you determined, *out of the same Scriptures* to instruct the people committed to your charge, and to teach nothing, as required of necessity to eternal salvation, but that which you shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the Scripture?

"*Answer.* I am so persuaded, and have so determined by God's grace."

Not so 'Anglo-Catholics;' for on this point, which is the fulcrum of all religious belief, there is a broad disagreement, in terms, in spirit, and in the issue, between the Church of England, and the 'Anglo-Catholic Church' in England;—a difference far

more important than any which distinguishes the Established Church from orthodox dissenters.

"The Bible," say these conforming dissidents, "rests in the hands of the Church, to be dealt with in such a way as the Church shall consider best, for the expression of *her own mind*, at the time.—This surely may be considered as a Catholic axiom." If it be, then the writer received ordination from a church that is not catholic.

"Scripture was never intended to teach doctrines to the many."—But

The Church of England affirms that all necessary religious truth is contained in Scripture; and that it may thence be safely and certainly drawn *by every humble reader*. According to 'Catholic teaching' it is "a near thing, that doctrines are contained in Scripture at all: the wonder is that they are *all* there: humanly judging they would not be there, but for God's interposition; and therefore, since they are there by a sort of accident, it is not strange that they shall be but latent there, and only indirectly producible thence."

Spread over a large surface of writings, and expressed in every variety of phrase, is this anti-protestant principle, which the Homilies energetically and pointedly condemn, and which the Articles exclude by the clearest affirmations of the contrary doctrine, and which the Ordination Services, with a grave intensity, reject.

Is there a moment when the Church may be listened to with a certainty of hearing her mind fully expressed, and in terms not to be misunderstood? That moment is surely the one in which its 'chief shepherds' are to receive their appointment.

We are now seeking for evidence touching the great question, Whether the Church of England holds the PROTESTANT DOCTRINE of the sufficiency, and supremacy, and sole authority of Holy Scripture—or, the ROMISH DOCTRINE of its insufficiency, uncertainty, obscurity, and subordination—first to the voice of tradition, and then to the mind of the Church, which "deals with Scripture as to itself may seem best."

The Bishop elect has already repeated the profession which he made when he was ordained priest:—the consecrating Bishop, or Archbishop, then asks—

"Will you then faithfully exercise yourself in the same Holy

Scriptures, and call upon God by prayer, for the true understanding of the same; so as you may be able, *by them*, to teach and exhort with wholesome Doctrine, and to withstand and convince the gainsayers?"

"*Answer.* I will do so by the help of God."

Is not this the moment in which some reference should have been made to that Rule of Faith to which Anglo-Catholics conform their doctrine and worship? Should not a Summary of Antiquity—a Thesaurus Patrum, have been commended to the devout regard of the new-created Bishop?—

"Then the Archbishop shall deliver him (the Bishop) THE BIBLE, saying,

"Give heed unto reading, exhortation and doctrine. Think upon the things contained in THIS BOOK" . . . .

The Church of England, then, knows nothing of the first axiom of Anglo-Catholicism.

Nor does Christian Antiquity know any thing of it. It is a principle as *recent* as it is false, and as ill sustained as it is pernicious.

It is peculiarly important, at this time, that the agreement of the Church of England, and of every Protestant Church, on the point now before us, with the best of the Fathers should be fully understood: we shall then be the better prepared to trace to its real source—the Papacy—the Papacy of the worst times—the anti-biblical doctrine upon which the entire structure of 'Church Principles' is now made to rest.*

It is clear that, if an appeal to Antiquity is to be made in support of the Church-of-England Protestant Principle of the sufficiency and sole authority of Holy Scripture, and of the right and duty of the laity to read, and to study the same, the conclusiveness of this evidence will be directly as its *lateness*. In other words, if writers of a late age are found expressing themselves with a cordial energy on these points, and in a manner consonant with the tone of the Church of England, in all her Formularies; and if the jealous ambiguities, and the endless shifts of the Tract writers on the subject of Tradition, and of Church intervention,

* To this subject I have already adverted incidentally. See Vol. I. pp. 460—463.

are sustained by no authorities better than those of the Romish Church, after the breaking forth of light in the middle ages—then we may well think the Protestant Principle *sufficiently* sustained; and the contrary to be deprived of all but the worst kind of support.

There can be no need, in this instance, to bring forward the often-cited evidence of the earliest age. Besides, this evidence, conclusive as it is, may perhaps be open to an evasion, *first*, from that indistinctness which attaches to the immature and loosely expressed notions of that infantile era: *secondly*, from the doubts that hover about the text (generally) of these ancient remains: *thirdly*, from the circumstance that, within the period which was embraced by the recollections of aged men, or of recollections that had passed through the medium of only one generation of pastors and elders, an appeal to tradition was quite natural and legitimate; although it almost immediately afterwards lost nearly its whole value: and *fourthly*, from the fact which has been too little adverted to, that, where the early Christian writers are appealing actually to the authority of Scripture, they often designate the Inspired Writings by phrases of ambiguous *sound*; although an unbiassed and well informed reader cannot but understand them, as they were understood in their own times. A spurious support has been obtained for the dogma of the authority of Tradition, as overruling that of Scripture, by gleaning some single sentences in which the *word*—Tradition occurs, where in truth, nothing is intended but Scripture itself. Take an instance.

Unde est ista TRADITIO? asks Cyprian (to Pompeius) utrumne de Dominica et Evangelica auctoritate descendens, an de Apostolorum mandatis atque Epistolis veniens? Ea enim facienda esse quæ *scripta sunt*, Deus testatur, et proponit ad Jesum Nave, dicens: Non recedet liber legis hujus ex ore tuo, sed meditaberis in eo die ac nocte, ut observes facere omnia quæ SCRIPTA SUNT IN EO. Item Dominus, Apostolos suos mittens, mandat baptizari gentes, et doceri, ut observent omnia quæcunque ille præcepit. Si ergo aut in Evangelio præcipitur, aut in Apostolorum Epistolis, aut Actibus continetur, ut a quacunque hæresi venientes non baptizentur, sed tantum manus illis imponatur in pœnitentiam; observetur divina hæc et sancta *traditio*.

In the sense therefore of Cyprian's times—the 'Traditions we have received' were nothing but the Evangelic and Apostolic Writings, in comparison with which no customs, or reported Apostolic usages, were of any account. "Ne traditionibus humanis Divina Dispositio violetur, et Mandatum Dei rejiciatum."

Whatever may have been the errors of those early times of unguided fervour, an ambiguous regard to the Inspired Writings was not one of them. Whoever has looked into Clement of Alexandria, or Irenæus, or (even with his strange fancies) Tertullian, or Dionysius, or Cyprian, or Arnobius, or Lactantius, must admit that the style of that pristine era was, in this respect, thoroughly Protestant:—that is to say, that the broadest distinction is observed, invariably, between the Canonical Scriptures, and all other writings; and to the former a deference is given with which nothing competes. It is observable that almost the very phrases of the English Ordination Services occur in the following passage; and it should be remarked that affirmations so full and so well defined, are equivalent to an explicit denial of the contrary doctrine of the joint, or overruling authority of oral Traditions, or of the decisions of the Church, for the time being.

Nec consuetudo quæ apud quosdam obrepserat, impedire debet quo minus veritas prævaleat et vincat. Nam consuetudo sine veritate vetustas erroris est.... In compendio est autem apud religiosas et simplices mentes, et errorem deponere, et invenire atque eruere veritatem. Nam si ad divinæ traditionis caput et originem revertamur, cessat error humanus, et Sacramentorum Cœlestium (the Scriptures) ratione perspecta, quicquid sub caligine ac nube tenebrarum obscurum latebat, in lucem veritatis aperitur.... Quod et nunc facere oportet Dei Sacerdes Præcepta Divina servantes, ut si in aliquo nutaverit et vacillaverit et veritas; ad Originem Dominicam et Evangelicam et Apostolicam Traditionem (the Gospels and Epistles) revertamur, et inde surgat actus nostri ratio, unde et ordo et origo surrexit.—CYPRIAN, *ad Pompeium*.

If then Cyprian be indeed an authority—let him be listened to while thus advancing, by anticipation, an apology for the Reformers of the sixteenth century. What did *they* do but, as he recommends, revert to the head and fountain of Christian Truth?—What did they, but, as "it behoves the priests of God to do," go back to "the

Gospels and Epistles, thence to derive afresh the principles of belief and practice which had long been obscured or lost?"

It is however more pertinent to descend to a later time, and to find writers of highest repute still adhering to the sufficiency and peerless authority of Holy Scripture. Apart from a knowledge of the facts, one would have thought it probable that the great defection which was to extinguish the light of Christianity for so long a period, would take its rise in a removal of the Scriptures from their place of supreme authority. It was not so; and the fact deserves a more serious and distinct attention than hitherto it has received. This modern endeavour to put the Church and its multifarious Traditions between God and the people; and, as did the 'Scribes and Pharisees,' to rear a structure of human interpretations, such as should nullify the Divine Law, was the consummation, not the commencement of the great apostasy. In truth it was a device of the Spiritual Tyranny, suggested, or brought more into use, by the danger of the moment, when the breaking forth of Scriptural light, at once, in several quarters of the Papal territory—namely, the South of France, Bohemia, and England, drove the apostate Church to make war directly upon the Scriptures, and to interdict the perusal of them to the Laity.

Especially is it to be noted, that those who of late have laboured so strenuously to restore the Despotism of the Apostate Church, commenced their work with an elaborate establishment of the very principle, with the announcement of which that Despotism reached its climax.

The Church of England, as now constituted, and as expressing her mind in her authorized Formularies, solemnly renounces this *late* impiety:—she knows nothing of it, but to reject it with scorn; and she rests her own claims to the regards of the people on the opposite doctrine—the Supremacy and Sufficiency of Scripture, and its adaptation to the purposes of popular instruction.

And in holding this course, the Church of England is amply sustained by the concurrent testimony of the great writers of that very era to which a deference is paid in other instances, so unwisely.

When once this despotic jealousy of the popular study of the

Scriptures has possessed itself of a body of Clergy, there is no longer heard from their lips the expression of a fervid, cordial satisfaction, in mentioning the diffusion of the Inspired Writings in any country:—and conversely—where this pleasure *is* expressed—becoming as it is to a Christian heart, we may safely infer that no dogma is recognised, the tendency of which is to disparage or supersede the word of God.

"The Scriptures," says Chrysostom (iii. p. 86, et seq.) "are as a paradise of delight, in the midst of which we do well to take up our perpetual abode . . . and this paradise (in this respect) better than that of Eden, embraces all countries:—Visit the nations that first see the sun—even the people of India;—or turn to the West, and reach the Britannic islands: coast the shores of the Euxine, or traverse southern regions, and you will every where find those who are learned in the Scriptures; differing indeed in speech, but of one accord in faith and spirit. [The people therefore had the Scriptures in their vernacular dialects.] Barbarously perhaps they may utter their piety; but it is the same piety [in its source and substance] . . . Would you learn the excellency of these waters of life—learn it in the use of them! . . . Let us then give ourselves to the reading of Scripture, not merely in these two hours [of attendance at church] for this will not suffice for our [spiritual] security. But let *every one* as he returns home from this place take his Bible in hand—καὶ ἕκαστος οἴκαδε ἀναχωρήσας τὰ βιβλία μετὰ χεῖρας λαμβανέτω;—and let him dive into the meaning of what is therein written;—if indeed he would derive from them a permanent and full advantage."

Those who talk so much of their reverence for Antiquity, let them listen to Antiquity, which, on *this* subject at least, will reprove their bold opposition to the injunctions of the Church within which they minister.—

"So it is," continues Chrysostom, "that he who gives himself to the assiduous perusal of the Sacred Writings—seating himself as it were beside these waters, *even although he may have no one at hand to interpret them to him,* yet, by the diligent perusal of them, will derive thence, as from their roots, a great benefit. . ."

Is not this in the very style and spirit of the Homilies of the

English Church? It is in fact Protestant teaching! Listen again to this same 'great Clerk and Preacher.'

"This then I constantly insist upon—and will do so—namely, that not merely in this place [the Church] ye should hear the word; but that at home ye give diligent attention to the reading of the Sacred Scriptures. Such has been my exhortation to those with whom I have privately to do. Let not any one give me the cold reply—indefensible as it is—'As for me, I am fully occupied with business in court—I have the interests of the state on my hands—I am occupied with my craft—I have a wife to care for—children to nourish—a household to manage—I am a man of the world, and it is not for *me* to read the Scriptures! This duty belongs to those who have betaken themselves to the summit of mountains, for the very purpose.' What sayest thou, O man? Does not the study of Scripture concern thee, because forsooth thou art surrounded with worldly cares? So much more reason hast thou than they [the monks] to read thy Bible . . . (i. 903.)* . . . It is not possible—nay it cannot be, that any one should be saved who does not addict himself to this spiritual reading." (i. 906.)

The Church of England, as we have seen, in her Homilies, has given her judgment decisively in favour of the popular reading of the Scriptures—"Therefore the humble man may search any Truth boldly in the Scriptures, without any danger of error," &c.

Now let us hear Chrysostom on the very same point.

"But what, say some, if we do not understand the things contained in these books? [the Scriptures.] [I reply] That even if you do not apprehend what is there laid up, much advancement in holiness will thence result; nor indeed can it be that you should fail altogether of the meaning. With a view to this very case, was it by the Divine providence and grace ordered, that these books [the Gospels and Epistles] should be composed by Publicans, Fishermen, Tent-makers, Shepherds, Goat-herds—men simple and unlearned, that none who themselves are such—simple and untaught, should take refuge in this pretext; but that the things spoken should be readily intelligible to all; and that the artificer, and the slave, and the poor widow, and the most

* A passage almost identical occurs in tom. vii. p. 34.

untaught of mankind, might derive something of benefit and advantage from the hearing the Scripture read. For—unlike the literature of the heathen, these books were not penned with a view to vain glory ; but for the salvation of those who hear them." (i. 906.)

This is nothing but good Protestant doctrine, and is altogether consonant with the Homilies of the English Church:—but how little accordant it is with the ordinary style of the modern champions of Tradition and Church Principles, let the readers of their works declare!

We shall find Chrysostom (and his contemporaries) going even further than this, in their assertion of the great Protestant principle:—we may add, as far as the Reformers themselves went.

The philosophist, and the school teacher, seeking only what may win the admiration of their hearers, even when they chance to utter what might be beneficial to the many, are careful to wrap their meaning in artificial obscurities. "Not so," says Chrysostom, "the apostles and the prophets, who acted on the very opposite principle, of making themselves understood by all, as being the common teachers of the world; and so as that *every one,* AND FOR HIMSELF, *might be able to learn, in the mere hearing of Scripture read, what they declare.* As says the Prophet—They shall be all taught of God, &c.; and Paul—And I, brethren, &c. ἵνα ἕκαστος, καὶ δι' ἑαυτοῦ μανθάνειν δύνηται ἐκ τῆς ἀγνώσεως μόνης τὰ λεγόμενα." This does not fall short of the Protestant 'right of private judgment.'

With all their professed deference to Antiquity, the Writers with whom we have now to do, have *never* indulged themselves in the pleasure of uttering sentiments like these:—and yet such sentiments are *common to the Fathers;* and are undoubtedly 'catholic,' and 'primitive.' But we shall find that these writers, like the champions of Rome, know how to quote the Fathers in support of whatever is superstitious; while they treat them with contempt when they utter wholesome and momentous truths.

Almost in the very words of the Homily cited above, does this Father go on to recommend the diligent perusal of Scripture.—"If after repeated perusal the meaning is still obscure, have recourse to some one wiser than thyself—to a teacher; and God,

seeing thy fervour, will—even if man does not, open the meaning to thee."

The Church of Rome tells us—and the Tract writers do so too, that the perusal of Scripture by the people is the sure source of heresies. The Homilies, as we have seen, affirm the very contrary, and assert that it is ignorance of Scripture that begets error. Now let us hear Chrysostom on this same point—critical as it is in relation to the entire controversy.

"A great safeguard against sin is the reading of Scripture.—The ignorance of Scripture is a great precipice, and a deep pit! Perdition is it to be uninformed of the divine Laws.—*This ignorance it is which begets heresies*, and leads to a corrupt life, and throws every thing into confusion. It cannot be, nay it cannot, that any one should go away from a diligent hearing of the Scriptures, without benefit." (i. 907.)

In another place (iii. 207), this Father, after asserting the divine authority of every part of Scripture, reproves the caprice, or the negligence, of those who will read those portions only which they think the most intelligible. "From this negligence," says he, "arise heresies, as well as many other evils;" and surely we may attribute to the general ignorance of Scripture, which this great preacher here laments, and so severely blames, the prevalence, in his own times, of the gross corruptions that marked the fourth century. "Among those calling themselves Christians," he says—"τῶν Γραφῶν δὲ ἡ ἐμπειρία ἠμέληται καὶ παρῶπται, acquaintance with the Scriptures [skill in them] is neglected and contemned." This negligence he severely reproves.

Again, and nearly in the words of a Homily above cited, Chrysostom affirms the intelligibleness of Scripture under the divine teaching. "Nor does Holy Scripture need the aid of human wisdom for its [true] understanding; but only the revelation of the Spirit, through whose help we draw thence a manifold advantage." (T. iv. 213.) "As aromatics yield their perfume so much the more, the more they are bruised, so do the Scriptures give up their hid treasure of meaning in proportion as they are constantly handled." (iv. 119.) In those instances, and they are not rare, in which the preacher, with much amplification, as his manner is, commends to the people the constant

perusal of Holy Scripture (as iv. 318), not a word does he add, as if wishing to reserve the authority of the Church; or indicating any fear of those many and grievous evils which modern Romanists and Tract writers have traced to the bad Protestant custom of reading the Bible.

In passages where the difficulties occurring in Scripture are particularly alleged, the preacher, instead of reminding the people of their dependence, for safe guidance, upon the Church, and its Traditions, insists so much the more earnestly, upon the duty of a frequent perusal of them, and of a humble application to God, for the heavenly teaching. This is very remarkable in the Commentary upon Genesis xiii. and xiv. (iv. 405 and 408;) where this great Protestant doctrine is affirmed emphatically; and, in the way of antithesis, the absence of all human teaching is supposed. Let the reader turn to the passage commencing—"ἀλλὰ κἂν ἄνθρωπος ἡμῖν μὴ γένηται διδάσκαλος . . . . . ." and acknowledge that it is altogether in the style of our English reformers, and utterly unlike that by which the professed admirers of the Fathers have distinguished themselves.

These citations might easily be multiplied. The topic is one of those which is most frequently introduced by Chrysostom; and it is always handled on the same principle; and this principle is identical with that which was the mainspring of the Reformation, and which the English Church has laid as the foundation of her ecclesiastical structure, and which she formally professes in the Sixth Article.

Chrysostom spoke the uniform language of his times in this instance. It is the grand commendation of that age; nor does it appear to be lowered by any contrary ambiguities of expression. The opposite doctrine we shall be able to trace to its origin in a later age.

That great Theologue of the Nicene Church, Jerome, and whose tendencies were all in support of existing institutions, is nevertheless as soundly Protestant as Chrysostom, in regard to the paramount authority of Scripture.—"Ergo nec parentum, nec majorum error sequendus est, sed autoritas Scripturarum et Dei docentis imperium. (In Hierem. cap. ix.) Propterea errant, quia Scripturas nesciunt, et quia ignorant consequenter

virtutem Dei, hoc est, Christum, qui est Dei virtus, et Dei sapientia." (In Matth. cap. xxii.)

Far from professing a slavish regard to the opinion or authority of those who had gone before him on the same path, this great critic declares, in the Preface to his Commentary on the Gospels, that he had not troubled himself even to inquire what his predecessors had delivered. "Igitur omissa autoritate veterum, quos nec legendi, nec sequendi mihi facultas data est, sed historicam interpretationem, quam præcipue postulasti, &c. . . . ."

In his admonitory Epistles to his friends, this Father is frequent in commending the study of Holy Scripture, *by itself*. Thus to Paulinus:—After enumerating the Inspired Books, with descriptive commendations of each writer, he says, "Cernis me Scripturam amore raptum excessisse modum epistolæ, et tamen non implesse quod volui. . . . . Oro te, frater charissime, inter hæc vivere, ista meditari, nihil aliud nosse, nihil quærere. Nolo offendaris in Scripturis Sanctis simplicitate, et quasi vilitate verborum: quæ vel vitio interpretum, vel de industria, sic prolata sunt, ut rusticam concionem facilius instruerent: et in una eademque sententia aliter doctus, aliter audiret indoctus."

An Epistle from Augustine to Jerome, as it presents itself at this moment, may well be cited, to the same effect. "Imò vero Sanctam Scripturam *in summo et cœlesti autoritatis culmine collocatam*, de veritate ejus certus ac securus legam." Epist. 97.

This is a style which the favourers of the authority of Tradition do not use.

Not only is Holy Scripture reverently spoken of, and confidently appealed to, as the only definitive authority, but this is often done in the way of comparison with the authority of the Fathers. Thus, and very explicitly, Theodoret, in the Dialogue between Orthodoxus and Eranistes.

"*Eran.* Thou hast stated this plausibly enough, yet I would be glad to know how the ancient Fathers of the Church understood that passage—The Word was made Flesh.

"*Orth.* Thou oughtest to have yielded assent to the proofs adduced from the apostles and prophets; but since thou askest for the sense of the holy Fathers, I will, with God's help, bring forward this succour also . . . ."

The *principle* of all religious assent is here most distinctly advanced; while the testimony of the Fathers is adduced merely in compliance with the request of the learner. Ἔδει μέν σε πεισθῆναι ταῖς ἀποστολικαῖς καὶ προφητικαῖς ἀποδείξεσιν.

No occasion could have been more fit for advancing—had it been held in Theodoret's time—the dogma, that the mysteries of religion are to be received, because the Church teaches, and Tradition approves them.

Theodoret knew nothing of an authority equal or paramount to Scripture; nor (need it be said) Augustine. We have heard Cyprian appealing from human to divine authority; and in the same spirit Augustine, without scruple, relieves himself from all restraint, alleged to arise from the decisions of Cyprian: boldly, and in Protestant style, he has recourse to the sufficiency and supremacy of the Inspired Books.

Noli ergo frater contra divina tam multa, tam clara, tam indubitata testimonia, colligere velle calumnias ex episcoporum scriptis, sive nostrorum; sicut Hilarii; sive antiquam pars Donati separaretur, ipsius unitatis, sicut Cypriani et Agrippini: primo, quia *hoc genus* litterarum ab auctoritate canonis (*aliter* a canonicis auctoritate) distinguendum est. Non enim sic leguntur, tanquam ita ex eis testimonium proferatur, ut contra sentire non liceat, *sicubi forte aliter sapuerint quam veritas postulat.—Ad Vincentium.*

"Accessible to all," says this Father, "although fully understood by few, Holy Scripture, like a familiar friend, speaks at once to the heart of the unlearned, and of the learned."—*Ad Volusianum.*

It may safely be affirmed, that no writer, German, Swiss, or English, of the sixteenth century, has expressed himself more decisively, or more clearly, than has Augustine, when his subject led him to trace the line marking off the Inspired Books from all other compositions, of whatever kind.

I ask the reader's especial attention to the following passage, and ask too that the sentiment it contains may be compared with the *general drift* of those Writings in which so much regard has been professed for the Nicene Fathers. Are they, then, to be listened to, whenever they would lead us astray from Scripture,

but not when they declare their submission to it as the sole authority?

Augustine to Jerome thus writes (Epist. 82):—

Ego enim fateor caritati tuæ. SOLIS EIS SCRIPTURARUM LIBRIS, qui jam canonici appellantur, didici hunc timorem honoremque deferre, ut nullum eorum auctorem scribendo aliquid errasse firmissime credam. Ac si aliquid in eis offendero litteris, quod videatur contrarium veritati, nihil aliud, quam vel mendosum esse codicem, vel interpretem non assequutum esse quod dictum est, vel me minime intellexisse, non ambigam. ALIOS AUTEM ITA LEGO, ut quantalibet sanctitate doctrinaque præpolleant, non ideo verum putem, quia ipsi ita senserunt; sed quia mihi vel per illos auctores canonicos, vel per probabili ratione, quod a vero non abhorreat, persuadere potuerunt.

Thus did Augustine profess his profound regard to the canonical books, as *alone* fraught with absolute truth; and thus did he humbly and judiciously exempt them from every suspicion of error; and thus, moreover, did he profess the freest exercise of his personal judgment in relation *to all other writings, without an exception!* But this is not all, for I have not yet adduced the concluding lines of the passage. Mark then the words that follow. We are told by eminent Anglo-Catholics, and in flagrant contrariety to the doctrine of the Church of England, that, if we wish to learn 'what is true or false in religion, or right or wrong in morals,' we must consult the 'wise men who lived fifteen hundred years ago.' We obey, then, this injunction, and we find these same 'wise men' (in this instance, at least, they were wise) rejecting with indignation and horror any such deference, as due to themselves, or to any other uninspired persons! No instance can be more signal or conclusive than the one before us. Augustine, one of the greatest of the Fathers, is in correspondence with Jerome, the most learned and canonical of them, and thus he writes, (in immediate continuity with the words above cited):—

Nec te, mi frater, sentire aliud existimo: prorsus, inquam non te arbitror sic legi tuos libros velle, tanquam Prophetarum, vel Apostolorum: de quorum Scriptis, quod omni errore careant,

dubitare nefarium est. Absit hoc a pia humilitate et veraci de temetipso cogitatione; qua nisi esses præditus non utique diceres, &c. . . . .

In a word, if we are indeed to listen to the Fathers, these Fathers solemnly warn us against the impiety of placing them for a moment on the level occupied by Holy Scripture. This is good Protestant teaching; and it is thoroughly consonant with the professions and Articles of the Church of England.

As if not content even with this emphatic assertion of his deference to Scripture alone, Augustine, further on in the same Epistle, repeats the sentiment with much animation; and he does so when the authority of great names was the very point in question.

Every one of Augustine's tomes would furnish several passages in the same strain, and always embodying the principle whied attaches ultimate authority in matters of religion to the Canonical Scriptures, and to nothing else. Nothing competes with these, when any point of belief or duty is in question. And these Scriptures, he says, "while they occupy the profoundest regards of the learned, yield their saving meaning to the rudest hearers. They are able to make men wise unto salvation."

Some further exemplification of what is here affirmed, I shall endeavour to include among other supplementary quotations, hereafter to be given. But, compelled as I am to reserve my narrow space for evidence more directly important, I will here pause, challenging contradiction in affirming—

That the great writers of the first five centuries (and even later) are nearly unanimous, and most of them are animated, in professing, what has come to be designated as the 'Protestant doctrine,' of the supremacy and sufficiency of Holy Scripture, and its adaptation to the mass of the people.

I affirm that the jealous and tyrannous doctrine of the Romish Church, and of the modern promoters of Church Principles, is neither primitive, nor catholic; and cannot be made to appear so, but by a disingenuous citation of detached sentences; and especially by suppressing the many and copious passages which attest the general mind and feeling of the writers on the subject.

With a cordial pleasure I join in this high praise of those upon whose manifold errors I have been compelled to insist.

It was not until the Church of Rome had stained herself deep in blood, that she proclaimed herself absolute mistress of Holy Scripture—sole interpreter of its meaning, and keeper even of the page.

While I illustrate this fact by some citations, I must appeal to those who have made themselves pretty well acquainted with the ordinary style and general purport of the writings with which, in this controversy, we have to do, to say whether, in spirit and tendency, and even in actual language, these writers do not savour far more of the Church of Rome, *in its worst periods*, than they do of the Fathers, whom they profess to follow; or of the Church within which they minister.

It cannot be necessary to occupy these pages with often-quoted paragraphs, and sentences, from the Tracts for the Times, or from the other works of the same writers, and their friends. Every reader of those productions will at once recognise the coincidence of temper, doctrine, tendency, and phraseology, which I here allege.

All the world has mistaken them, if these writers do not mean to say, That the people are to receive their religion—not from the Bible, but from the Church; and that the Church guides herself in the interpretation of Scripture, chiefly, or absolutely, by the 'consent of the Fathers,' as it may be gathered from their extant writings.

The Church of England, along with all the Reformed Churches, holds, on each of these points, the opposite doctrine; and in so doing, is in perfect harmony with Christian Antiquity.

The principle which it has been the main endeavour of the Tract writers to establish, is summarily, and we may surely say *fairly* expressed, in a clause of Pope Pius VI.'s Creed.

Item Sacram Scripturam juxta eum sensum, quem tenuit et tenet sancta mater ecclesia, cujus est judicare de vero sensu et interpretatione Sacrarum Scripturarum, admitto; nec eam inquam, nisi juxta unanimum consensum Patrum accipiam, et interpretabor.

The Rule digested in the Council of Trent concerning forbidden books, expresses, in like manner, a principle vehemently denied

by the English Church, as well as opposed to the opinion of the Fathers; but under many guises asserted by the Tract writers—That the perusal of Scripture by the mass of the people, is the source of more evil than good. "Cùm experimento manifestum sit, si Sacra Biblia vulgari linguâ passim sine discrimine permittantur, plus inde, ob hominum temeritatem, detrimenti, quàm utilitatis oriri."

The decrees of the council whence this language is borrowed, convey, as nearly as one can suppose, the belief and feeling of Anglo-Catholics, as to the danger of 'Bible reading'—the determinative authority of Tradition, and the supremacy of the Church, as the interpreter of Scripture.—Much pity has been expressed by them, for those whose narrow prejudices impel them to look to the BIBLE, as containing the whole of Revealed Religion, whereas Catholics, more enlightened, listen with equal reverence to the *unwritten* revelation, held and handed down by the Church!

Now I appeal to the reader, and ask whether such doctrine is any thing but a mere echo of the *Roman* Catholic doctrine of a late age; and as thus expressed. Let the identity of phrase be noted, and it will be impossible to resist the conviction that much which has graced the pages of Anglo-Catholic writers, is simple plagiarism, or say, translation, from the Acta Conciliorum!

Every line of the following passage might find its counterpart in some recent publications.

The Clergy, having been enjoined to resist with all their might the spreading heresies of the times—1548, they are especially charged to oppose the pestilent doctrine, then entertained by so many concerning the Bible, as if "it contained all things necessary to salvation;" or in other words, as if Holy Scripture were the Revelation of God's will, exclusively of Tradition, and the authority of the Church. It will be remarked in how pious and spiritual a style the anti-protestant and orthodox belief, on this point, is expressed; and how carefully the conclusion is drawn, that the proper remedy for this Bible-mania was—a more sedulous attendance upon the sacraments and festivals of the Church, and a more scrupulous regard to the Traditions of the Fathers.—

Let Oxford Tract readers say if there be a single sentiment in

the following passage that strikes the ear as new "... in primisque dent operam, ut perniciosissimus error qui multorum animos occupat hoc tempore, eradicetur, quo verbum Domini limitibus adeo angustis quidam includunt, ut ab eis nihil nisi atramento in Sacris Bibliis exaratum, pro verbo Domini habeatur: cum verbum Domini initio nullis libris, sed Apostolorum cordibus impressum inveniretur: quod postea non Scriptura tantum, sed magna ex parte Ecclesiæ et fidelium animis sermone communicaverunt, et sacræ litteræ testentur, legem evangelicam ipsissimum Domini verbum, in tabulis cordium carnalibus, Spiritu Dei vivi scribendum fuisse. Hortetur præterea populum ut verbum Dei attente audiat, ab hæresibus abhorreat, Missæ officio libenter intersit, frequenti confessione se expurget, mundo corde et avido salutarem Christi corporis cibum excipiat, Sacramentis et eorum mysteriis, secundum Ecclesiæ Traditionem, religiose utatur, et diebus festis, sanctis tantum vacet operibus. . . ."—*Acta Concil.* t. ix. p. 2039.

This 'pernicious regard' to the Bible, as set forward by 'Lutherans and Calvinists,' was stigmatized by the Romish authorities, precisely in the terms in which the same 'heresy' is now inveighed against by our Tract writers; and the instructions for resisting it are the very same:—

Need we doubt that the analogy would be pursued, in the measures taken to repress this mischief—if the means of doing so were available?

Three centuries earlier, and when the Church was in her palmy state, she had thus decreed.—

Prohibemus etiam, ne libros Veteris Testamenti, aut Novi, Laïci permittantur habere; nisi forte Psalterium, vel Breviarium pro divinis Officiis, aut horas beatæ Mariæ, aliquis ex devotione habere velit. Sed ne præmissos libros habeant in vulgari translatos, arctissimè inhibemus.—*Acta Concil.* t. vii. p. 178.

It was straitly forbidden to the laity to possess either the Old or New Testament. A Psaltery or Breviary, or the Office of the Virgin might indeed be conceded to the wishes of the pious; but not even these in the vernacular tongue. And these decrees were enforced, under the watchful eye of Innocent III. by the most terrible means—even by the devastation of wide provinces, and the massacre of the inhabitants.

Let us grant that the Church of Rome, and that Anglo-Catholics, are right on this point.—But assuredly the Church of England does not think so.—The Church of England professes the opposite doctrine—and is founded upon it. Its formularies are explicit;—or if they were not, their meaning shines out in the writings of the men who made the Church what it is—a protestant Church.

"The pope therefore selleth but wind and smoke for fire .... his blasphemous masses do not appease, but provoke God's wrath .... his rotten relics cannot comfort you; his blind, dumb, and worm-eaten idols can do you no good .... Thus you see a manifest difference between Christ and ANTICHRIST .... The diversity of religion professed in these our times is here most plainly and lively depainted. For the better clearing whereof I will in these notes (*marks*) lay before your eyes the whole difference which is between them.

"First, *we disagree in the very foundation.* They lay one ground, and we another. We lay no one stone but only upon that foundation of the apostles and prophets.... The foundation of our religion is the written word, the Scriptures of God—the undoubted records of the Holy Ghost.... At this the adverse party doth greatly storm: they cannot abide to have controversies judged only by the Scriptures.... the pope well perceiveth that, if the Scriptures may be buried, his miracles will than stand him in good stead."—*Abp. Sandys*, First Sermon, Parker Soc. Ed.

Sentiments of this kind are in a true sense catholic, and primitive; and the Church of England, so long as she adheres to them, may justly claim the benefit of an appeal to antiquity. Not so those who are labouring to sap the foundation of the Church, and who anathematize—with Rome, the characteristic principle of Protestantism. These treacherous sons of the Church have drawn their doctrine from a very different source; nor is there any difficulty in tracing the streams to the fountain head.

Tradition, we are told, is Revelation, as truly as Scripture is such; and therefore is to be reverenced, as the expression of the will of God. If so, then Peter Dens, reporting the *principle* of his Church, has not erred in saying—

Ex traditione divina deducitur argumentum certum et infallibile; quia traditio divina est *paris auctoritatis* cum Scriptura Sacra.—*Dens Theol.* I. p. 4. And who is it that determines what is, and what is not, the traditio divina? it is the Church:—the Church therefore is the real source of doctrine;—not the Scriptures.—But this is Popery, and it is Anglo-Catholicism also. It is however *not* 'primitive teaching,' nor is it the principle of the Church of England:—but the very contrary.

It is not surprising that those should inveigh against the Reformation, and the Reformers, who have borrowed their own principles, *even verbatim*, from the very synods that were held to repress the Reformation. Many passages in the writings of Tractarians, and their friends, are nearly *literal versions* of such as the following. Let the reader say if it be possible to doubt whence the later passages have been drawn.

We cite now from the Decrees of the Synod of Sens, or of Paris, held in the year 1528—contra Lutheranorum hæreses. In the acts of this, and several other Councils, held after the breaking out of the 'Lutheran heresy,' almost the entire scheme, which is variously embodied in the Tracts for the Times, may be found; and this with *so singular a coincidence of phrases*, that one is actually startled by the unexpected identity. Can such a coincidence have been fortuitous? Can we believe this when it occurs in scores of instances.

The history of heresy, as traced by this Council—ending with that of Luther, hinges upon the one pregnant error of 'setting at nought'—parvi pendere—the decisions of the Church, and of holding as true nothing—quod non fuerit expressum in Sanctis Scripturis. This was the cause of the 'insane heresy' of the Valdenses;—homines idiotæ, et litterarum expertes. Then followed that concentration of all heresy—Wicklefus! who—radicitus totam ecclesiæ enervare auctoritatem contendit! More than can be enumerated were the pernicious errors of this 'mad fellow.' Quid plura? Sacrum ille ridet canonem Missæ! dies festos sanctorum pariter et reliquias tollit;—and worse than all—preces fidelium ad eos dirigi vetat!—Impious man, he actually forbad the faithful to direct their prayers to the saints! a practice 'so respectably supported' as it is!

This 'uncircumcised Philistine' was however overthrown by the Church, and with him, by anticipation, Luther and all his adherents, as well as all other 'Manichees,' along with Melanchthon, Carolstadius, Lambert, Zuingle, Œcolampadius, and the whole of their 'execrable accomplices;'—the very same who have lately been cursed from Oxford.—Probati doctores exsecrati sunt. The Council does not however specify our English Reformers (it was too early for them) and therefore, *thus far*, these execrations are unsustained by 'authority.'

These holy Fathers and 'approved doctors' utter however one prediction which time has not, as yet, verified, namely, that the poisonous books of Luther, and his gang, would, like those of Vigilantius and other heretics, quickly disappear, and be heard of no more—ut ne eorum vestigia quidem supersint.*

The Church, says this venerable synod, 'cannot err;' and whoever resists her authority is to be anathematized. But this is not enough. Those who curse, will do more than curse, *if they can*. The Council therefore, after 'a cursing' which might content even an Anglo-Catholic, piteously calls upon his Most Christian Majesty, 'by the bowels and mercies of God,' to rouse up his Christian zeal, and to cleanse his estates of the poison of heresy, by the immediate use of the sword, if he would still merit his designation, as a Christian prince. In the blood-stained page of French history we learn how obediently these injunctions were carried into effect!

But now the axioms and the directive principles of the Church scheme, as uttered by this assembly, were, *even to the letter*, the very same with those which the writers of the Tracts for the Times have been diffusing through the English Reformed Church! This fact deserves attention.

Of the verbose decrees of the Synod, in this instance, I can furnish only a few sentences; and heartily wish that the reader who has the opportunity of doing so, would peruse the whole. He would not be able to doubt that, in these, and in similar Romish documents of the sixteenth century, he has reached the

* The "Parker Society" is running counter, with a high hand, to this vaticination; at least so far as it may attach to our English Reformers!

sources of the mighty river which has, in these times, spread its waters over the ecclesiastical surface of England.

The glory of the Church, as the spotless spouse of Christ, is the theme of the first decree.

The absolute authority of the *visible* church, *i. e.* the Papal hierarchy, is the subject of the second; which also inveighs against the Lutheran heresy of attributing to the *invisible* Church, or universal body of Christ's true disciples, what is said of the Church in the Pauline Epistles.

In the third, the infallibility of general councils, especially when assembled to condemn heretics, is affirmed. The Church of England declares that "General Councils may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God." Not so, either these doctors, or their modern disciples, at Oxford. —Sancta igitur et inviolabilis est sacrorum conciliorum universalium auctoritas, cui quisque pertinacius refragatur hostis fidei jure optimo censeri debet.

Fine things have of late been said of the sublimity and excellence of Holy Scripture—when held in the grasp of the Church, and dealt out sparingly to the people.—But in this line these moderns have still been copiers only. After having carefully laid down the axiom, That the Church is the *real* authority in matters of faith, the Council can safely express its pious admiration of the Inspired Volume.—

Magna profecto fuit, semperque futura est Scripturæ Sacræ auctoritas: in qua nihil falsum. . . . 'Yet,' say they, 'nothing can be more futile or inconclusive than are arguments drawn from passages of Scripture, according to the whims of individual readers! si pro cujusvis arbitrio,' &c. Thus it comes to pass (if this license to read the Bible be granted) that artizans, and the lowest of the mob, become fixed in the notions they have imbibed!

In a word, nothing can be done unless men may be brought to 'Hear the Church,'—not the Bible.

Hac nempe velut internuntia, patrum et sacrorum conciliorum organis, Spiritus Sanctus docet nos omnia, et suggerit nobis omnia: sine quorum auspiciis, qui Scripturæ Sacræ sensum habere se jactitant, non intelligunt quæ loquuntur, neque de quibus affirmant; sed videntes non vident, et audientes, non audiunt. In

enumerandis itaque. . . . aut in exponendis Scripturis non pascit hœdos suos juxta tabernacula pastorum, sed fodit sibi cisternas dissipatas, quæ continere non valent aquas; et spretis orthodoxorum patrum vestigiis, proprii spiritus judicium sequitur is veluti schismaticus et hæreseôn omnium incentor et fautor a tanta temeritate reprimatur.

This is the text and tissue of many pages of the Tractarian writings. But in the next—the fifth Decree of the same council, the very terms of the doctrine concerning Tradition, as advanced by these writers, and the same illustrations, and in the same order, are presented within the compass of a few lines. The illustrations and proofs I must omit; for it is not my purpose *to argue the question* concerning Tradition; but merely to exhibit the fact, that in their leading doctrine, the Tract writers have followed—not the Fathers, who in fact hold the opposite Protestant principle;—but the Romish authorities; and these of a late age. I need not place Mr. Keble, or the Tracts, in a parallel column with the following:—

Ampla certe Scripturæ latitudo, ingens et incomprehensibilis profunditas: perniciosum est tamen eo errore laborare, ut nihil admittendum putetur, quod non e Scriptura depromptum sit. Multa quippe a Christo. . . . here follow the instances, *in order*, which have been appealed to by the favourers of Tradition; and then the conclusion—

Oportet itaque nos auctoritati patrum consuetudinique majorum, usque ad tantum tempus per tantam annorum seriem protelatæ, etiam non percepta ratione credere, eamque ut antiquitus tradita est jugi observantia ac reverentia custodire. Quam si quis eo prætextu pertinacius rejiciat, quod non legitur in Scripturis Sacris, ut hæreticus et schismaticus habeatur.—*Acta Concil.* t. ix. p. 1937.

But the Church of England *does* reject certain doctrines and practices on this very ground—that "they cannot be proved by God's word," and are destitute "of warranty of Scripture." The Church of England, therefore, is pronounced to be heretical and schismatic, by the above-cited decree; which decree, nevertheless, contains the very pith, and marrow, and words, of the Tracts for the Times, and of the associated publications.

From the moment when the abounding superstitions of the

Church began to be assailed, and protested against, on the groun l of an appeal to Holy Scripture, this same doctrine, as now promulgated among ourselves, came to be professed; and with very little variation even in the terms. Sometimes more rancour, and sometimes less, marks the announcement of it; but the principle is ever the same. The last citations were from the documents of the fifteenth century.—We now fall back upon those of the ninth.

The fourth council of Constantinople, called the eighth œcumenic, was held in the year 869, for the condemnation of Photius, whose erudition and intelligence, still more than the freedom and justness of his criticisms on some of the Fathers, had stung the ignorant fanaticism, and alarmed the fears of the Clergy and the Church.

> Chorus Patriarcharum honorabilis et magnus
> Pessimum inimicum prosequitur, ut lupum,
> A thalamo casto, et venerabilibus locis;
> PHOTIUM aio amarissimum apostatam!

It is not our part to take up this great man's defence; but who and what were his opponents? It is well to understand the connexion, always real and intimate, as it is, even if sometimes concealed, between that 'church doctrine,' with which we are now concerned, and demonolatry and idolatry.

"It behoves us to adhere reverently, and with an immoveable regard, to the decrees of our predecessors, and to venerate the principles of the holy Fathers; wherefore the sacred and venerable images of the Lord Jesus, and of his always-virgin Mother, and of all the Saints—are to remain unhurt, and inviolate;—and as to John, late patriarch of Constantinople, and his sectaries, who, with foul mouth, declared that they were to be broken and trampled on, we pronounce him, and them, to be anathema from Christ, and the catholic and apostolic church."—*Acta Concil.* t. v. p. 850.

Those who have lately listened to a pealing thunder of curses, with its lengthened reverberation, from Oxford, would be apt to think that the genuine anathema-style had been imitated from the damnatory eloquence of this very council;—but we pass on to our proper subject.

The first of the decisions, or 'Rules,' of this 'Holy and universal Synod,' of which I shall presently cite the words, affirms the necessity of walking by the light of the Traditions of the Church—the judgments of the Fathers, and the decrees of holy councils. The second sustains the authority of the Popes—Nicolas, and Hadrian, as well as of the patriarch Ignatius, who was restored by the council. The third asserts that 'great catholic verity,' That the images of Christ, and the saints, ought to receive *the same reverence* which is due to the persons they represent. Let us hear the very words of this 'Rule,' closely conjoined as it is with the doctrines now maintained by the Tract writers.

After declaring the utility of these representations to the wise and to the unwise, the decree concludes—

Si quis ergo non *adorat* iconam Salvatoris Christi, non videat formam ejus, quando veniet in gloria paterna. . . . Similiter autem et imaginem intemeratæ matris ejus, et Dei genetricis Mariæ; insuper et iconas sanctorum angelorum depingimus, quemadmodum eos figurat verbis divina Scriptura; sed et laudabilissimorum apostolorum, prophetarum, martyrum, et sanctorum virorum, simul et omnium sanctorum; et honoramus et *adoramus*. Et qui sic se non habent, anathema sint, a Patre, et Filio, et Spiritu Sancto.

Does the Church of England hold with any part of this infernal blasphemy? Does she not rather condemn it with vehemence? But, not less decisively, she rejects the *principle* on which this idolatry is made to rest, and which principle is the corner-stone of modern 'Church Principles.'

Per æquam et regiam divinæ justitiæ viam inoffense incedere volentes, veluti quasdam lampades semper lucentes et illuminantes gressus nostros, qui secundum Deum sunt, sanctorum patrum definitiones et sensus retinere debemus. . . . . Igitur regulas quæ sanctæ catholicæ ac apostolicæ ecclesiæ, tam a sanctis famosissimis apostolis, quam ab orthodoxorum universalibus, nec non et localibus conciliis, vel etiam a quolibet Deiloquo patre ac magistro ecclesiæ traditæ sunt, servare ac custodire profitemur; his et propriam vitam, et mores regentes, et omnem sacerdotii catalogum; sed et omnes qui Christiano censentur vocabulo, pœnis et damnationibus, et e diverso receptionibus, ac justifica-

tionibus quæ per illas prolatæ sunt et definitæ, subjici canonice decernentes; tenere quippe traditiones, quos accepimus, sive per sermonem, sive per epistolam sanctorum qui antea fulserunt, Paulus admonet aperte magnus apostolus.—*Acta Concil.* v. 899.

Inferences on this ground follow closely.—

If the Fathers of this Council were justified in applying Paul's admonition to the Thessalonian Church, in the way they here do, to the body of ecclesiastical Tradition—whether embracing more or fewer documents, then the apostle, by a direct implication of consequences, warrants, not merely asceticism, and a thousand superstitions, but the invocation of saints, and the adoration of images and pictures!

But these things the Church of England utterly condemns.—The Church of England therefore does not admit such an application of the apostle's injunction; and those who have lately so applied it, and have thence derived what they deem a Scriptural warrant for the abrogation of the supreme authority of Scripture, are running counter to the mind of the Church, in the most important of all questions, and they are moving coincidentally—*not with the ancient Church*, but with the spiritual tyranny of the Papacy.

The same principles we find advanced, with very little variety of expression, at all periods of that prophetic cycle, during which this ghostly despotism ruled the world triumphant, and was allowed to crush its opponents. The only difference is, that sometimes the phrases employed are more keen, and sometimes more soft. The reader's attention is particularly directed to the sample that follows, being the conclusion of the preamble to the Decrees of the Sixteenth Council of Toledo.

Atque omnes qui tunc in ea minime consistunt, sive constiterint, aut ab ea recesserunt, seu recesserint, aut peccata in ea relaxari diffidentiæ malo negaverint, nisi pœnitudinis ope ad eam redierint; et quæque Nicæna Synodus servanda decrevit, Constantinopolitanus conventus venerari instituit, Ephesini primi concilii amplecti auctoritas sanxit, atque Chalcedone sanctorum unanimitas, vel reliquorum conciliorum, sive etiam omnium venerabilium patrum in fide sana recte viventium edicta custodire præcipiunt, absque aliquo dubietatis nævo non crediderit; perpe-

tuæ damnationis sententia ulciscetur, atque in fine sæculi cum diabolo ejusque sociis ignivomis rogis cremabitur.—*Acta Concil.* t. iii. p. 1794.

These were indeed heavy conditions of salvation! In the happier days of the Apostles it was true that 'whoever believed in the Lord Jesus Christ' might be assured of salvation. In the seventh century this was far from being enough; nor was it even enough to belong to the Church, and to conform to its rites:—for besides all this, a man must believe, and must hold without 'a speck of doubt,' whatever the council of Nice had decreed to be held—and whatever the 'convention of Constantinople had pronounced as sacred, and whatever the authority of the first council of Ephesus had sanctioned; as well as, whatever the council of Chalcedon had approved; together with the decrees of *all other councils*, and the decisions of all venerable Fathers, being of orthodox faith, and pure lives: and whoever entertained the least doubt as to the points, or any of them, sustained or affirmed by these voluminous authorities, could look for nothing but perdition; and at the end of the world he would burn with the devil and his associates, in raging fires!

Now the 'acts' of the several councils herein specified, together with the judgments and decisions of all orthodox and holy Fathers, from the first age, to the time of this council of Toledo, do not fill a less space than seventy or eighty folio volumes!

To the people, and indeed to the Clergy—even to the most erudite of them, this can mean nothing but an unconditional assent to all and everything which may be declared by the Church to be a part of necessary truth. This decision therefore is tantamount to an absolute and final removal of the Scriptures from the view of the people, as propounding the terms or conditions of salvation: and it is a substitution, equally absolute, of another authority—that of man.

Every modification of this 'Church Principle,' and whether it be announced in persuasive, or in vindictive tones, effects the very same purpose—that of 'making void the law of God.'

The several constantly-recurring forms of this church doctrine should be noted and distinguished.—The one is that which it assumes in the hands of sanguinary hierarchs;—and the passage

just cited may serve as a specimen of this kind. The other form is that into which it subsides during seasons of intellectual imbecility. Under both these phases, the doctrine, as now anew professed, appears—characterized perhaps, in great measure, by the personal temper of the leaders. Thus it has its aspect of acquiescent servility, and of wrathful arrogance—bursting out, as we now hear it, into curses.*

The following is a sample of the servile kind—a mere expression of slavish indolence:

Indubitanter autem doctoribus pie et recte tractantibus verbum veritatis, ipsisque Sacræ Scripturæ lucidissimis expositoribus, id est, Cypriano, Hilario, Ambrosio, Hieronymo, Augustino, ceterisque in catholica pietate quiescentibus, reverenter auditum, et obtemperanter intellectum submittimus, et pro viribus quæ ad salutem nostram scripserunt amplectimur.—*Acta Concil.* t. v. p. 89.

Does the English reader ask a translation of this passage? he will find it, almost literally rendered, in several places of the *periodical* writings of Anglo-Catholics. Sometimes this absolute submission has been challenged, generally, in the name of the 'great and wise men' of the fourth century: sometimes Athanasius, Basil, and Ambrose, have been selected as the 'fully instructed doctors' whom we are bound to follow, in faith and practice. But the meaning is always the same;—and this meaning, which it is our special object now to insist upon, is diametrically opposed to the foundation principle of the Church of England; which rests its claims, not upon the decisions of councils or doctors, but, without intervention, upon Holy Scripture. This irreconcilable contrariety must for ever separate the Protestant Church of England, from the Romish and Greek Churches, even although the doctrine and worship, on the two sides, were identical. The difference is only *aggravated*, not *altered*, when, on the one side, this rule of submission to the Church and its traditions, not to Scripture, is urged for the support of 'abominable Idolatries.'

Let us now bring this momentous difference to a conclusive test. It will not be pretended that the Church of England does not condemn, with a severe and indignant energy, every species

and disguise of Image worship, by whatever pretexts recommended:—and it does so on the ground of the plain import of Scripture. In a word, the worship which the second council of Nice approved, and restored, the Church of England has abolished, and does perpetually prohibit.

But the second council of Nice rested its decisions in favour of Image worship entirely upon that 'CHURCH PRINCIPLE,' which is now advanced among ourselves.

It will be said—'It did so inconclusively, inasmuch as the citations therein adduced from the writings of the Fathers, are insufficient for the purpose; and are counterbalanced by many passages of a contrary import.'

This evasion will not serve the purpose of those who might wish, by means of it, to screen themselves from a fatal inference.

The 'Church Principle,' as now advanced, requires the people to submit to the decisions of the CHURCH EXTANT, sustained as they are, or profess to be, by the unanimous teaching of the Fathers, and by the decrees of œcumenic and orthodox councils. But who is the censor of this alleged agreement between the voice of the Church, and the voice of Antiquity? The people can never enter, for themselves, upon any such scrutiny; nor indeed are they allowed to do so. To *them* there is no way of escape from the decisions of the Church in the lap of which they are nursed. If the Church principle be good, the people are bound to 'adore the images of Christ, and of the virgin, and of the saints, as they would adore the persons themselves, if visibly present.'

We are not at this time determining concerning the principle in question, whether it be good or bad. But we affirm that, if it be good, then the Church of England is schismatical, heretical, and impious; for it condemns with vehemence, and rejects with contempt, a worship which has been authentically declared to be of divine authority. Our meaning however will the better appear by means of some citations from the documents of this celebrated convention.

The Epistles of Gregory III. to the (Iconoclast) Emperor Leo, are peculiarly characteristic of the principles of the Church as they were then developed. With boundless arrogance this Servus Servorum Dei chides the emperor, who, listening to evil counsel-

lors, had meddled with things not belonging to his function; and had dared to deface and overthrow 'sacred images,' which he had impiously called 'idols;' denuding churches which the 'holy Fathers had decked and bedizened!' The emperor had even threatened to pay a visit to Rome, and there to demolish the image of Peter himself! The pope dares him to the attempt, supported as he was by the nations of the west, who confided in him (the pope) and in Peter, whom 'all the kingdoms of the west regard as a terrestrial god' ὃν αἱ πᾶσαι βασιλεῖαι τῆς δύσεως Θεὸν ἐπίγειον ἔχουσι.

But in the second of this pope's letters to the Iconoclast emperor, the 'Church Principle,' as now promulgated among ourselves, is clearly enounced and cogently urged:—and it is urged for the fit and pious purpose of enforcing 'the adoration of holy images and pictures.'

The pope is annoyed, in an extreme degree, in finding, by the emperor's letter that he had not abandoned his perverse opinion:—that he did not 'savour the things of Christ'—μὴ φρονῶν τὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ; nor follow the steps of those great, wise, and noted Thaumaturgues, Fathers, and Teachers (of the eastern church, not to name others less familiar to him) Gregory of Neo-cæsarea—Gregory Nyssen—Gregory the theologue, Basil of Cappadocia, and John Chrysostom, besides ten thousand doctors like them, holy and divinely influenced.

The pope then reminds this refractory emperor of those of his illustrious predecessors who had proved themselves submissive sons of the Church, and who promoted its welfare in compliance with the instructions of its chief priests:—such were Constantine the Great—Theodosius the Great—Valentinian the Great, and Constantine, the father of Justinian—emperors those who ruled in a religious manner, and in concurrence with the advice of pontiffs and councils! Whereas he—Leo, from the moment of his accession, disregarding the decrees of the Fathers, had set himself to despoil churches, and to deface their adornments. The pontiff then defines, at length, the several provinces of the spiritual and secular authorities, and concludes by exhorting the refractory emperor to return to his proper function—to repent him of his errors, and to hold to what he had been taught; and especially

to honour and glorify those holy and illustrious Fathers and Teachers, whose part it is, with God, to dispel blindness from the heart.

The emperor had inquired how it was that nothing had been said about images in the six preceding councils. "No," replies the Pope, "nor about the common use of bread and water. But shall we not, therefore, eat bread, or drink water? Have not both, from the very beginning, been appointed for the support of human life? And thus too, images, from the first, have been handed down; and pontiffs have carried them, when attending councils; nor has any Christ-loving and godly person ventured to take a journey without these potent preservers—acceptable to God!" Again the heretical prince is exhorted to repentance, and to do his part toward bringing the flock of Christ, even all orthodox churches, within one fold, and under one shepherd!

And of this unity and orthodoxy the 'adoration of images' was to be the pledge and sign! Throughout the voluminous documents of this council, the same Church-doctrine—the same plea for unity, urged even in pathetic terms—the same demand of submission to the constituted authorities, and to the Fathers and councils, are reiterated; and all with the one intention of firmly riveting upon the East, as upon the West, a system of idol-worship far more brutish and sordid than that which had prevailed in pagan Greece and Rome.

The fervent style of many of these documents is not their least remarkable feature; and it is a feature especially deserving of our regard, at a time when a lofty and tender spirituality of phrase is employed among ourselves to recommend the same principle, and the same worship.

The readers of history need not be told what sort of persons were the empress Irene, and her son Constantine; and yet, who so pathetically devout as they? Who so sensitive to 'the glory of God,' when 'holy images' were blasphemed or defaced? These imperial personages, in addressing Hadrian, lament that all the East had been seduced from 'the Truth'—*i. e.* the adoration of images, and had continued in their error, until God had raised *them* (Irene and Constantine) to the throne, who 'in truth seek his glory, and hold that which has been handed down from

his apostles, and all his doctors.' His blessed paternity—the pope is therefore implored, nay, God who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of *the truth*, demands, that he should aid and authenticate the council then assembled, for the establishment of 'the ancient tradition,' concerning 'venerable images,' by his presence: and so 'fulfil the Scripture which says—Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, ye priests, saith the Lord!'

Then follows a string of texts, most piously adduced;—the gates of hell should not prevail against that Church which the pope, the empress, and her son, desired to see brought to unanimity, without schism or separation!

Certain bishops, who, in the blindness of their hearts, had uttered many things against 'holy images,' but who had been brought to repentance, were introduced to the council, there to abjure their errors before all, and to implore restoration to the bosom of the Church. Pitiable indeed are these recantations; and frightful the curses which the penitents were called upon to utter, in attestation of their conversion. "I have sinned," says one, "before heaven, and in your sight; yet receive me. . . . . Those who do not worship holy and venerable images, I anathematize. Those who dare to blaspheme holy images, or to call them idols, I anathematize. Those who do not diligently teach all Christ's beloved people to adore sacred images, I anathematize. The calumniators of Christians, that is to say, those who break holy images, I anathematize. Those who resort to mental reservations, and do not from their souls confess to the worshipping of images, I anathematize."*

Another repentant bishop—a Gregory, bishop of Neo-cæsarea, acknowledged that his sin and fault had been great, beyond measure. The patriarch Tarasius reminds him that he ought, from the first, to have lent his ears to the "divine apostle Paul, who says—'Hold fast the Traditions which ye have received, whether by word of mouth, or my epistle;' and again, writing to Timothy and Titus, says—'Shun profane novelties of words.'—But what more profane, or what can be a greater innovation in language,

* For a remarkable coincidence of style, see "A Letter to the Rev. C. P. Golightly," pp. 12, 13.

than to call Christians—idolaters?" "It was bad, indeed," replied Gregory, "yet I implore forgiveness."

Many pages might be quoted to the same effect, and many that are more strikingly illustrative of our argument, than the above—if they could be adduced at length; and all tending to show when, and in what connexion, and for what purposes it was, that the Church doctrine, now advanced, was distinctly announced. NEVER HAD THAT DOCTRINE BEEN HEARD OF until some time after the worst corruptions had prevailed, and when it had become necessary to defend them against remonstrants—the Protestants of each successive age.

In each successive age, from the eighth century to our own times, this doctrine—concerning the paramount authority of Tradition, and of the Church, and the glory and beauty of that one visible Church, of which Rome is the centre, has been adduced in support of spiritual tyranny—of profligate institutions—of sanguinary crusades against heretics; and of the basest idolatries. I challenge contradiction in asserting—

That the protestant principle of the sufficiency and supremacy of the Scriptures, and of the benefits accruing to the people at large from a familiar acquaintance with them—which principle the Church of England fully adopts and lays as the foundation of its worship and polity—was maintained, and emphatically professed by all the great writers of the first five—we might say six, centuries:

—That the opposite principle, of the incompleteness of Scripture; and of the parallel or paramount authority of Tradition, and of Councils, and of the Church, far from being primitive or catholic, was the invention of later times; and has been used invariably as the engine of spiritual despotism, and the prop of the foulest errors.

If either of these affirmations should be called in question, or if it be said that the evidence above cited is too scanty to sustain them, I pledge myself to adduce five times as much, and of a kind not to be evaded. The only difficulty in the present argument is that of selecting from so vast a mass, what may be a sample of the whole, and yet not exceed the limits of a few pages.

The preliminary question in every religious controversy must relate to—THE RULE OF BELIEF.

We are now told that the RULE of belief and worship, to which all men are bound is—'The teaching of the Church.' But the Church, when interrogated, affirms that she teaches according to the RULE OF TRADITION;—or the authentic decisions of the primitive Fathers and Councils.—

We then interrogate these very Fathers respecting, not so much the several points of their doctrine, as the RULE, in accordance with which *they* teach what they do teach.—

But the Fathers, when thus questioned, reply with unanimity and animation—'That they know of no other Rule, or authority, than that of the canonical Scriptures!' To this Rule they refer us, with religious caution and distinctness.

Not merely do the Fathers, in the spirit of personal humility, disclaim, for themselves, any authority in matters of faith; but they repeatedly, and deliberately, and in the most solemn terms, advance the Protestant principle of the sole authority and sufficiency of Scripture.

What then—if we thus pursue it through its channels—what does the Romish and 'Church-Principle' in fact amount to?—or to what point does it bring us round?—Precisely to this doctrine of the sole authority of the written documents of the will of God!

Into this it resolves itself; and it is only while we are prohibited from thus pursuing it round its circle, that it means any thing; or that it can sustain any stress of argument.

When two authorities, like two mechanical forces, are opposed, one to the other (as they must be whenever they contradict one the other) then the one that is *ultimate* as well as *fixed*, must sustain all the stress, and hold its position; while the one that is only a medium of impulse, yields.

The dicta of the Church and of Tradition may indeed, at any time, be forced upon men's acceptance by an extraneous power—by engines of terror, or by seductions; but wherever the intrinsic moral forces of the two authorities are left to work freely, then, as is demonstrable, the ultimate must become the *real*, and therefore the *sole*, and the paramount authority.

The Pseudo-Church has, in every age, from the seventh or eighth, tacitly acknowledged this fact—*first*, by forbidding access to the ultimate authority; and *secondly*, and always at the same moment, by availing itself of extraneous powers for carrying its own unauthentic decisions.

There is no mystery in the steady concomitance of these two means—Prohibitions of Scripture, and Persecution, when a *real* authority is supplanted by one that is *spurious*; and which is itself conscious of the futility of its pretensions.

Many and discordant opinions may be entertained on the question whether the Church of England has, in every instance, rightly understood and interpreted Scripture; and her individual members may think she has erred in this or that particular, without compromising their membership. And, inasmuch as she herself appeals to Holy Scripture, and to no other Rule; and moreover commends the perusal of it to her members, indiscriminately, and enjoins her ministers to conform themselves always to this standard, she would by no means compromise her own authority, or disparage her honour (but on the contrary, would win a brighter lustre) if, in any instance, and on due inquiry, she were to revise her worship or constitution, in compliance with the principle which already she has professed, and by which she consents to stand or fall.

To seduce, or to attempt to seduce the Church from her pledged adherence to the sole authority of Holy Scripture, must be a treason in those who owe her their obedience. But to incite her to carry forth her own principle, in any instance where an incongruity deforms her offices, or enfeebles her constitution, surely this is the part of her dutiful and well-instructed sons!

For a moment, and before we dismiss this momentous subject, let us compare the Church of England—and with it other Protestant communions, with the Church of Rome, on the very ground of that stability and immutability which its champions are now so loudly making their boast of, as conclusive evidence of its divinely sanctioned pretensions.—

What are the facts on the ground of which these boasts are advanced?

Romanism, as digested by the council of Trent, and as expounded during the last three centuries by its most approved authors, comprises, at the least, a dozen articles of belief and discipline of which—by acknowledgment, *not a trace* is to be found either in the canonical writings, or in the *genuine* records of the early ages. Moreover the actual rise and development, and at length the ecclesiastical recognition of these *innovations* is as clear as any matter of history whatever.

Of these innovations it is plainly confessed—we should not say confessed—declared, that they were the *after growths* of that expansive energy by which the Church is inwardly moved:—they have been new products, from time to time.—The immobility of the Church of Rome is therefore that of a tree spreading forth its branches, and shadowing the soil, and rising toward the clouds, more and more. It is not an absolute unchangeableness:—this cannot be pretended; but only *a continuity of development.* And these expansions are not mere additions of matter and form, precisely similar to the already existing foliage, fruit and ramifications:—they are grafts, barely to be recognised as of a kindred species.

Then this interior power of growth and aggregation, inasmuch as it is a vital function of the plant, cannot be supposed to have reached its last effort; unless we imagine the season of decay to have commenced. If this power has *ever* belonged to the Church of Rome, it attaches to it still:—it is, if real, intrinsic and immortal. What peculiarity can be challenged for the council of Trent, which should have imparted to it a power of parturition, exhausting for ever the fecundity of the Church? Nothing of this sort can be pretended.

The Church of Rome then, in the course of another thousand years, may have authorized as many innovations as it had during the millennium preceding the council of Trent: those changes were vital, and they now constitute the most marked features of Romanism;—the changes yet to come, the dogmas and the liturgic institutions yet in the womb of the Church, may be in an equal degree new and strange:—nay, there is nothing to pre-

vent their being immeasurably more so. To affirm that they may not, and that the Church has long since reached its fixed position, is virtually to acknowledge that it has forfeited a privilege it once possessed;—that its energies are gone;—that it has become as a corpse.

This then is our inevitable dilemma—

If there can be no more changes in Romanism, it must be because Romanism itself is fundamentally changed; and therefore must not boast of its immutability: for on this supposition, it has lost a vital power, which once was its glory.—

But, on the other hand, if it still retains this generative power, and if it be, indeed, in this higher sense, immutable, then there may yet be changes—indefinite, and incalculable;—and inasmuch as the innovations of past ages have been such as could never have been anticipated, or prognosticated, as probable, so neither can we, of this age, presume to predict what may be the compass or the quality of the future manifestations of this hidden force!

If then the Church of Rome be immutable *in respect of her interior principle*, or vital energies, then is she mutable, and variable too, without limit, without law or rule of analogy, in her dogmas, discipline, and worship:—she has varied from her youthful self immensely more than Mohammedism has done; and if she be as young as ever, in her constitution, she may yet amaze mankind with endless novelties!

But how stands the case with the Church of England:—if indeed she continue faithful to her *first principle*, and, with other Churches, professing the same principle, always adhere to it?

Let us inquire.—

There have indeed been 'variations of Protestantism,' and these have been almost as numerous as the innovations of Romanism. But there are some points of difference which ought to be noted.

Protestantism has exhibited the irregular gyrations of unconnected masses, around ONE CENTRE; and that centre immoveable, and well defined:—we mean THE TEXT OF SCRIPTURE.

Romanism, if more compact, has pursued a cycloidal orbit, around a centre which is itself unfixed, and which is always in *procession*.

In the one, there has been perpetual agitation; but no change of absolute place. In the other, *apparent* rest, or quiescence; but a real and undefined advance in an orbit which passes forward no one can tell whither.

Let the inevitable issue, after a length of time, of these two movements, be philosophically calculated. That body, or that system of bodies must, in the end, be the most stable, to which these two conditions attach, namely—That it has an immovable point of repose, or centre of gravitation; and That it is always tending toward that centre,

But now this is the very description of Protestantism, and it is its *distinction*, or its logical definition, as compared with Romanism.

Within the entire circle of human affairs—institutions—monuments, nothing is so immovably fixed, nothing so completely exempted from the otherwise universal law of decay and mutability, nothing so firm as an ancient writing, when once the Text has been well determined, and the grammatical sense of the terms nearly ascertained. Pyramids and mountains of granite are far less durable.

Now we suppose only these things—

An ascertained canonical Text:—

An improved, and constantly improving, science of Criticism, in the diligent use of which accidental ambiguities are, one by one, removed, until all well instructed persons come to be nearly agreed as to the grammatical rendering of that Canon:—

And lastly, a deep-felt awe of the sacredness and excellence of the Inspired Books, and a constantly enhanced tendency of all minds, however much they may differ, to bow to this One and ever permanent authority:—a constantly increasing assiduity of research, quickened by a refreshed sense of the immeasurable superiority of the Scriptures to all human compositions.

Now we affirm that, where these things are—there, there is at work A MIGHTY LAW OF STABILITY, which must, in its cycle of operations, bring about a firm and permanent condition of all bodies coming within its influence. The infirmity of human tempers—the obliquity of human intellects—the obduracy of self-love—the inconstancy of the heart, and the levity of the intel-

lect:—yes, all causes of disturbance will, in the end, yield, and be absorbed, and fall into the one tendency, and be wrought into conformity with the Great Law of the system.

We further affirm, That what we have assumed as the conditions of a system which is tending to rest, and which includes a true principle of stability, do actually belong to Protestantism; and are, by its constitution, excluded from Romanism.

In this age (and *principally* by the labours of Protestant scholars) the Text of the Inspired Books has reached a state of fixedness which leaves little to be desired.

In this age (and *principally* by the labours of Protestant critics and theologians) the science of interpretation, or Exegesis, has also rapidly advanced toward perfection.

At no period in the course of eighteen centuries has there been so general, or so deep-felt a regard to the divine authority of Scripture, as that which now attaches to, and distinguishes orthodox Protestant communities. With all its faults, this is (in Protestant countries) the age of the Bible! Is it not so most conspicuously?

The rise and spread of 'Church-Principles' is in fact mainly attributable to the dark jealousy of cold and narrow spirits, which this revived regard to the Bible has incited.

During seven or eight hundred years, preceding the Reformation, the Book of Scripture had been sealed, and men were shut up in the dark. Light was suddenly admitted; and the broad page was spread open. Unpractised eyes were dazzled, and read uncertainly; and men went forth, wondering and wandering! What else—without a series of miracles, could have happened?

Nevertheless the diversities of opinion then generated, did not prevent as great an amount of accordance in the first Truths of Christianity as can be boasted of by the Church of Rome;—and a far nearer approach to apostolic doctrine.

The slow and often retarded progress of Truth, in this world of ill influences, has not yet brought the differences of Protestantism to a close. But it has at length put in active operation those powers *which cannot but do so.* Every controversy which turns upon the meaning of Scripture has the effect of determining—in

the minds of calm and intelligent observers, some ambiguity, and of narrowing the grounds of future controversies. At the present moment a decisive refreshment of religious feeling among genuine Protestants—among those who 'delight in the law of the Lord,' and 'cleave,' with affectionate reverence, 'to his testimonies,' would instantly reveal the fact, That, amid their discords, true Protestants are 'of one mind,' and have been under a discipline preparing them for a state of visible coalescence.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND REJECTS ANCIENT, AS WELL AS ROMISH CORRUPTIONS.

ALTHOUGH the Church of England does, in this manner, and so decisively, maintain the Protestant axiom, of—The sole authority, and the sufficiency of Holy Scripture; nevertheless, she might, like the Nicene Church, while formally asserting the abstract principle, and while *professing* to be governed by it, have so violated it in the chief points of her worship, and discipline, as to show, either that the principle itself was not understood by those who digested her Formularies; or that their professed adherence to it was not sincere.

This is a case that may be supposed as possible;—but it is not so in fact. The Formularies of the Church (to say nothing of the well-known opinions of those who framed them, and who suffered for their Protestantism) the Formularies of the Church furnish abundant and conclusive proof—That the great principle of the Reformation is indeed the LAW, and the SOUL of the Institution; and that those great and pious men who modelled that Institution, did embrace Protestantism most cordially; even if it be true that they did not always carry out their regard to the Supremacy of Scripture, with perfect consistency.

Wherein this (assumed) failure in some of the details is apparent, and whence it arose, and in what manner it might best be remedied, are not the points now to be treated. They may hereafter claim our attention; but it is previously necessary to hold

up to view that broad surface of proof, which renders the Protestantism of the Church unquestionable, and which condemns the traitorous endeavours now in progress to attach it to the Romish Church, and to divorce it from its true alliances.

We have seen how *illusively*—to use the softest term which the case admits, the Tract writers, and their coadjutors, while professing to follow the Ancient Church, and especially the divines of the fourth century, have yet employed their chief strength in establishing a principle unknown to the ancient Church, and to the Nicene divines; and which, in fact, they have borrowed—*even to the-letter*, from the Romish Church of the middle ages.

A parallel, but a still more culpable inconsistency, attaches to these writers when, while frowning upon every species of Dissent, they allow themselves to denounce the Reformation, and to profess every doctrine which is the most characteristic of Romanism; and nevertheless occupy the seats of honour, and enjoy the emoluments of a Church which is Protestant in name, in principle, in doctrine, and in worship!

That the Church of England is indeed Protestant, not merely to the extent of a formally expressed general principle, but in its doctrine and worship; and that it is so, notwithstanding the solecism of its professed regard to Antiquity, is easily proved.

The proof to this effect, we shall gather as it presents itself, in a review of the authorized Formularies of the Church, and which, for our argument's sake, we must adduce, although familiar to the clerical reader. And inasmuch as what we have in view is not this or that doctrine, but *the general mind and meaning* of the Church, no inconvenience will arise in passing, abruptly, from one subject to another.

The Nicene divines have spoken confusedly, and inconsistently, as to the Remission of Sin, after Baptism:—the Church of Rome speaks consistently, and perniciously:—the Tract writers speak confusedly, inconsistently, and perniciously. Not so the Book of Homilies;—even although the subject of Baptism be the very one about which the thick mists of Antiquity hung in the view of the English Reformers.

"And they which in act or deed do sin after their Baptism, when they turn again to God unfeignedly, they are likewise

washed by this sacrifice from their sins, in such sort that there remaineth not any spot of sin, that shall be imputed to their damnation. THIS is that Justification, or righteousness which St. Paul speaketh of when he saith, &c. . ."—SERMON *of the Salvation of Mankind.*

No ambiguity attaches to language of this sort: the mind of the writer grasped Scriptural Truth, and expressed it, simply and clearly. Nor to the following passage, in support of which (did it ask any *such* support) many citations from the Nicene divines might be adduced. The doctrine of the Tract writers, on Justification, if partially accordant with Antiquity, is thoroughly one with Romanism. The Church of England, on this fundamental article is—Protestant and Scriptural.

"And so the grace of God doth not shut out the justice of God in our Justification; but only shutteth out the justice of man; that is to say, the justice of our works, as to be merits of deserving our justification. And therefore St. Paul declareth here nothing upon the behalf of man, concerning his justification, but only a true and lively faith; which nevertheless is the gift of God, and not man's only work, without God. And yet that faith doth not shut out repentance, hope, love, dread, and the fear of God, to be joined with faith in every man that is justified; but it shutteth them out from the office of justifying. So that, although they be all present together in him that is justified, yet they justify not altogether. Neither doth faith shut out the justice of our good works, necessarily to be done afterwards of duty towards God—for we are most bounden to serve God, in doing good deeds commanded by him in his Holy Scripture all the days of our life—but it excludeth them, so that we may not do them to this intent, to be made just by doing of them. For all the good works that we can do be imperfect; and therefore not able to deserve our justification; but our justification doth come freely, by the mere mercy of God; and of so great and free mercy, that whereas all the world was not able of themselves to pay any part towards their ransom, it pleased our heavenly Father, of his infinite mercy, without any our desert or deserving, to prepare for us the most precious jewels of Christ's body and blood, whereby our ransom might be fully paid, the Law fulfilled, and his justice fully

satisfied. So that Christ is now the righteousness of all them that truly do believe in him. He for them paid their ransom by his death. He for them fulfilled the Law in his life. So that now, in him, and by him, every true Christian man may be called a fulfiller of the Law; forasmuch as that which their infirmity lacked, Christ's justice hath supplied."—SERMON *of the Salvation of Mankind.*

Truth has its characteristic style:—it is plain, perspicuous, and straightforward in its direction. Such is the style of this passage. It is not merely Protestant—theologically; but Protestant *logically;* or as opposed to the repetitions, the reduplications, and the artificial darkness which distinguish the Romanist doctrine,—and still more so, that of the Tract writers. As compared with parallel passages drawn from the Nicene divines, the Homily above cited is not merely far more luminous, and internally consistent, than almost any thing which we meet with in the circle of Antiquity; but, especially, it stands uncontradicted by notions or practices that are incompatible with a cordial perception of any such Truth.

Certain modern writers have produced sentences and paragraphs from the Fathers, which sound evangelically; but before this sort of disjointed evidence can be admitted, as conclusive in the argument it is brought to support, we must know what were those other elements of the religious system of Antiquity, according to which the feelings and conduct of men were really determined.

It could be of little avail to define justification scripturally (which in fact the Fathers seldom or never do) if men were taught, at the same moment, to work out a righteousness for themselves, by tortures, celibacy, and starvation. But the Church of England not merely advances its scriptural doctrine of Justification boldly and clearly; for, more than this, it leaves it to take its proper effect, without detriment or encumbrance. It not merely holds the 'spotless robe;' but it casts away the 'filthy rags.' It rejects—asceticism—monkery—works of supererogation—penances—indulgences—purgatory—prayers *for* the dead—prayers *to* the dead; and that entire apparatus of fraud and delusion, which, wherever it is admitted, renders even the clearest doctrinal statements nugatory.

"This doctrine (of justification) all old and ancient authors of Christ's Church do approve."—So says the Homily before us;—an averment far too unexceptive. But even if it might be made good by a volume of citations, the vast difference, on this ground, between the ancient (Nicene) Church, and the Reformed English Church, remains not the less wide. If it were granted, which it must not be, that the ancient Church did hold 'the form of sound words,' it is equally true, that this profession was contravened by *every thing else*, belonging to its discipline, doctrine, and worship.

The ancient scheme of pietism, as well as the repetition of it in Romanism, is condemned, by a direct implication, in the vigorous simplicity of the following passage:—

"In our justification by Christ, it is not all one thing, the office of God unto man, and the office of man unto God: justification is not the office of man, but of God; for man cannot make himself righteous by his own works, neither in part, nor in the whole; for that were the greatest arrogancy and presumption of man, that Antichrist could set up against God, to affirm that a man might, by his own works, take away and purge his own sins, and so justify himself. But justification is the office of God only; and is not a thing which we render unto him; but which we receive of him; not which we give to him, but which we take of him, by his free mercy, and by the only merits of his most dearly beloved Son, our only Redeemer, Saviour, and Justifier, Jesus Christ. . . ."

All merit, on account of faith, itself, or of its exercises, is also to be renounced as well as that of all works, done at the impulse even of the best motives; and we are to trust in nothing but God's mercy in Christ, who was once offered for us upon the cross—"to obtain thereby God's grace, and remission, as well of our original sin in baptism, as of all actual sin committed by us after our baptism, if we truly repent and turn unfeignedly to him again. . . . So that our faith in Christ, as it were, saith unto us thus, It is not I that take away your sins, but it is Christ only; and to him only I send you for that purpose, forsaking therein all your good virtues, words, thoughts and works, and only putting your trust in Christ."

Let this bold simplicity be compared, either with Tridentine

ambiguities, or with the unintelligible shifts of certain modern Ceatises 'on Justification;' and then let it be said, whether the trhurch of England is not a Protestant Church! or let any other Protestant Church bring forward its authorized documents, and allege them to be more distinct, or to be more purely scriptural!

To the same purport are the 'Short Declarations of the true, lively, and Christian faith;' and the 'Sermons of Good Works;' and when, in these discourses, the approved doctrine is exhibited in the method of contrast with that which is denounced as false, the description is given in terms *equally applicable* to Ancient, as to Romish corruptions. The following passage is from the third part of the 'Sermon of Good Works.' In the 'second part' it had been shown, what those works are which God requires of his people, and that they are .... "not such works as men have studied out of their own brain, of a blind zeal and devotion, without the word of God"—"which works," it is added, "have come into repute as a consequence of the ill practice of setting up man's Traditions on a level with the word of God"—or above it.

"What man, having any judgment or learning joined with a true zeal unto God, doth not see and lament to have entered into Christ's religion, such false doctrine, superstitious idolatry, hypocrisy, and other enormities and abuses, so as by little and little, through the sour leaven thereof, the sweet bread of God's holy word hath been much hindered and laid apart? Never had the Jews in their most blindness, so many pilgrimages unto images, nor used so much kneeling, kissing, and censing of them, as hath been used in our time."

In passages such as these, and they are of frequent occurrence in the Homilies, we are to observe the *substance* of the reprobation, or the thing denounced as evil—and also the *adjunct* of that reprobation—namely, the assertion that these evils belong to 'our times.' It was a matter of course that they should be mentioned as abuses then actually extant. But is it therefore a logical inference that the same corruptions—the very same 'kneelings, kissings, censing, pilgrimages,' as practised twelve centuries earlier, are approved, and implicitly allowed? We think the contrary; and must conclude that the *genus* is condemned in the *species;* and certainly that all mere varieties of the species

are so condemned. Does the Church of England condemn the "censing an idol" in the sixteenth century, and license it in the fifth?

Every point of the immoral pietism which is rebuked in the following passage, attaches in as full a sense to the monkery of the fourth century, as it does to that of the sixteenth. The writings of Basil alone would prove this.

In this "Sermon" it is proposed to show "the enormities and abuses," that have belonged to the Religion of Tradition, under the three "chief heads," of "obedience, chastity, and wilful poverty."

"First under pretence or colour of obedience to their Fathers in religion—which obedience they made themselves—they were made free, by their rules and canons, from the obedience of their natural father and mother, and from the obedience of Emperor and King, and all temporal power whom of very duty they were bound to obey. And so the perfection of their duty not due, was a forsaking of their due obedience. And how their profession of chastity was kept, it is more honest to pass over in silence, and let the world judge of that which is well known, than with unchaste words, by expressing of their unchaste life, to offend chaste and godly ears. And as for their wilful poverty it was such, that when in possessions, jewels, plate, and riches they were equal or above Merchants, Gentlemen, Barons, Earls, and Dukes, yet by this subtile sophistical term—Proprium in communi, that is to say, Proper in common, they mocked the world; persuading that, notwithstanding all their possessions and riches, yet they kept their vow, and were in wilful poverty. But for all their riches they might neither help father nor mother, nor other that were indeed very needy and poor, without the license of their Father, Abbot, Prior, or Warden, and yet they might take of every man; but they might not give aught to any man, no not to them whom the laws of God bound them to help; and so, through their traditions and rules, the laws of God could bear no rule with them: and therefore of them might be most truly said, that which Christ spake unto the Pharisees, You break the commandments of God by your traditions."—SERMON *of Good Works.*

This is a description of monkery, as it has been in all times;

nor is any single point characteristic of the Romish, rather than of the Nicene monastic system. If indeed the Church of England, while condemning the *abuses* of this system, yet approved the principles of it, the places in which the former are so indignantly denounced, would be those where such an approval ought to be indicated. But no such saving clauses can be adduced:—not one such! The foundation of every species of asceticism, and monkery, is removed when we are cautioned against "the Pharisaical and Papistical leaven of man's feigned religion, which, although it were before God most abominable, contrary to God's commandments, and Christ's pure religion, yet it was praised to be a most godly life and highest state of perfection; as though a man might be more godly, and more perfect, by keeping the rules, traditions, and professions of men, than by keeping the holy commandments of God:" Within the compass of the Formularies of the Church, Monkery is, we say, nowhere commended, and never mentioned but to be reprobated. Those therefore who would now restore it, are putting high contempt upon the authorities which they profess to respect.

The same observation applies to each instance in which those observances which we speak of as—*popish* are condemned; for in these condemnatory passages, if the *abuse only* had been the object of blame, an exception would undoubtedly have been made in behalf of the abstract observance. But no such instance of reserved approval can be cited. The Church of England is therefore thoroughly—Protestant, in every such instance. Image-worship—it has been shamefully pretended, the Church condemns; but *not* the polytheism of the Nicene Church—not the practice of praying to dead men. Why then has it not taken care to distinguish between the two; and while denouncing the one, allow or commend the other? It never does so. Let the reader say whether the following passages could possibly have been written by men who, like our modern 'Catholics,' were hankering after the ancient and 'respectably-supported' practice of 'invocation of saints?' Every approach to these debasing abominations is sternly condemned in the authorized documents of the Church of England.

I request the reader to bear in mind the fact, of which evidence

enough has been adduced in these pages—That the saint-worship of the fourth century differed in nothing but in names and adjuncts, from that of later times. Those who are now sighing for the soothing devotions of Antiquity, find themselves compelled to deny, what is most obviously true—That the demonolatry of the Nicene Church was a mere repetition and image—part for part—of the superseded paganism. But the Church of England affirms this identity of the two systems; and in doing so, does it not emphatically condemn the practices of that age in which the imitation was designedly effected? I crave the reader's attention to the following citations, and ask, Whether the Church of England is not most grossly insulted by those who are now attempting to foist their gods under its wing?

"And for that idolatry standeth chiefly in the mind it shall in this part first be proved, that our image-maintainers have had and have the same opinions and judgment of saints, whose images they have made and worshipped, as the Gentiles Idolaters had of their gods. And afterwards shall be declared, that our image-maintainers and worshippers, have and use the same outward rites and manner of honouring and worshipping their images, as the Gentiles did use before their idols; and that therefore they commit idolatry, as well inwardly and outwardly, as did the wicked Gentiles Idolaters."—*On Peril of Idolatry.*

Then follow proof and illustration, at large, of what is here summarily affirmed—showing the identity, under a change of names, of the old paganism, and the christianized paganism; to which is subjoined a refutation of the very arguments resorted to by the divines of the fourth century, for excusing the errors to which they lent their sanction.

Whether those who compiled the Homilies were fully aware of the fact, that the practices they condemn, and the pleas they refute, originated with the 'ancient Fathers,' it is not easy to determine; and an astounding circumstance it is—to which I must presently direct the reader's particular attention, that, on the very page where the idolatries which Augustine laboured to excuse, are reproved, Augustine himself is cited, as a witness against them! Strange as this solecism is—not the less certain or peremptory is the Protestantism of these Sermons. Whatever

wears the semblance of a religious worship rendered to creatures, and whatever tends to introduce any such enormity, is reprobated in the most uncompromising manner, throughout these compositions. The Writers, as we shall be able to show, cite the Fathers most vaguely and inconclusively;—but yet it is always in support of Protestantism that they fall into these misunderstandings—or blunders, as we must call them.

The introduction of crucifixes and images stealthily in private chapels, whence they will find their way into churches—culpable folly as it is, would not be endured if due respect were paid to that "Book of Homilies" which the Church commends to her ministers (Article XXXV.) as fraught with "godly and wholesome doctrine."

Passages such as the following, may well be commended also, as "necessary to these times." Mortifying is the fact that cautions *such as these*, which seem adapted only to some dim era of a nation's history, should actually be needed at this time, and in a country like England, and within the pale of a Protestant Church! Can it be true that within the walls of the first university in Europe the toys and puppets of Romish idolatry are fondly desired, if not in course of restoration to their pedestals? It is time surely the Church should express aloud its feeling as to these guilty absurdities; and in doing so it may confine itself to the very language of those Homilies which we have been taught to regard as not only venerable, but authoritative.

"And thus you see, how from having of images *privately*, it came to public setting up of them in churches and temples, although without harm at the first, as was then of some wise and learned men judged; and from simple having them there it came at the last to worshipping of them; first, by the rude people—who, specially, as the Scripture teacheth, are in danger of superstition and idolatry—and afterwards by the bishops, the learned, and by the whole clergy. So that laity and clergy, learned and unlearned, all ages, sects, and degrees of men, women, and children of whole Christendom—an horrible and most dreadful thing to think—have been at once drowned in abominable idolatry, of all other vices most detested of God, and most damnable to man; and that by the space of eight hundred years and more; and to

this end is come that *beginning of setting up of images in churches; then judged harmless;* in experience proved, not only harmful, but exitious and pestilent, and to the destruction and subversion of all good religion universally. So that I conclude, as it may be possible in some one city, or little country, to have images set up in temples and churches, and yet idolatry, by earnest and continual preaching of God's true word, and the sincere Gospel of our Saviour Christ, may be kept away for a short time; so it is impossible, that images once set up in temples and churches, any great countries, much less the whole world, can any long time be kept from idolatry. And the godly will respect, not only their own city, country, and time, and the health of men of their age; but be careful for all places and times, and the salvation of men of all ages. At the least they will not lay such stumbling-blocks and snares, for the feet of other countrymen and ages, which experience hath already proved, to have been the ruin of the world.

"Wherefore I make a general conclusion of all that I have hitherto said: if the stumbling-blocks and poisons of men's souls, by setting up of images, will be many, yea infinite, if they be suffered; and the warning of the same stumbling-blocks, and remedies for the said poisons, by preaching, but few, as is already declared; if the stumbling-blocks be easy to be laid, the poisons soon provided, and the warnings and remedies hard to know, or come by; if the stumbling-blocks lie continually in the way, and the poison be ready at hand every where, and warnings and remedies but seldom given, and if all men be more ready of themselves to stumble, and be offended, than to be warned; all men more ready to drink of the poison, than to taste of the remedy—as is before partly, and shall hereafter more fully be declared—and so, in fine —the poison continually and deeply drank of many, the remedy seldom and faintly tasted of by a few; how can it be, but that infinite of the weak and infirm, shall be offended, infinitely more shall break their necks, infinite by deadly venom be poisoned in their souls! and how is the charity of God, or love of our neighbours in our hearts then, if, when we may remove such dangerous stumbling-stocks, such pestilent poisons, we will not remove them? *What shall I say of them, which will lay stumbling-blocks,*

where before there was none, and set snares for the feet, nay for the souls of weak and simple ones, and work the danger of their everlasting destruction, for whom our Saviour Christ shed his most precious blood! Where better it were, the arts of painting, plastering, carving, graving and founding, had never been found nor used, than one of them whose souls in the sight of God are so precious, should by occasion of image or picture, perish and be lost. And thus it is declared that preaching cannot possibly stay idolatry, if images be set up publicly in temples and churches." —*Against Peril of Idolatry. Third Part.*

The people are now told by the promoters and restorers of the incentives to idolatry, that the 'Catholicism' of the Church of England is, as they confess with sorrow, unhappily marred by the existence, among its Formularies, of some few passages of 'ambiguous' import, and which might possibly be misinterpreted as if the Anglican Church favoured Protestantism! The people thus confidently talked to, and themselves but little conversant, or perhaps not at all so, with the documents of their own Church, may actually believe what is told them—told them by reverend persons!

Meantime these "snares" are on every side laid for them;—the "stumbling-blocks" are planted in their path;—the "poison" is mingled with their food;—all the trumpery of Romish chapels is brought, with noiseless feet, into churches;—insidious allusions to these 'venerable means and monuments of piety,' are made in sermons;—the simple are encouraged to bend the knee;—the many, with whom religion is nothing but custom and imitation, follow, and do the same:—then, not to do so, becomes an offence—a want of ecclesiastical good breeding:—it is 'Protestantism,'—it is 'puritanism;'—it is 'dissent;' and thoughtless thousands of the people are thus beguiled into the filthiest quags of "abominable idolatry."

Such is the process of corruption which even now is suffered to proceed within a Protestant Church! Whither is fled the spirit of the men who composed the "Book of Homilies?"

These great and holy men looked with a just and religious horror, not merely upon the grosser forms of idolatry around them; but upon the insidious disguises by means of which it creeps

into churches, either as innocent invocation of the dead; or as 'a pious decoration:'—the two, after a little combined, standing forth in the naked abomination of an Image, to which the people direct their supplications.—Were these great men now to visit certain sacred edifices, where once they lifted their voice against the errors of the Papacy, they would not, we think, content themselves with an expostulation, soft as the tones of a dulcimer, but would be bold to denounce as—"wicked and intolerable" the endeavours they might witness to restore the Saints to their pedestals, and the Virgin to her throne.

We may hear the rebukes with which they would chide our folly, in passages such as this:—

"Let all this be taken as a lie, if the word of God enforce it not to be true. Cursed be the man, saith God in Deuteronomy, that maketh a carved or molten image, and *placeth it in a secret corner* (e. g. a private chapel) and all the people shall say Amen. Thus saith God. For at that time no man durst have or worship images openly, *but in corners only*: and the whole world being the great temple of God, he that in any corner thereof robbeth God of his glory, and giveth it to stocks and stones, is pronounced by God's word accursed. Now he that will bring (these things) . . . into churches and temples . . . . no doubt that person is cursed of God, and twice cursed, and all good and godly men and women will say—Amen; and their Amen will take effect also."

How vigorously does the writer of this Homily push the 'Anglo-Catholics' of that time with the demonstration of their own inconsistency!—They—precisely like the preachers of 'Reserve' among ourselves, professed a tender regard to the souls of the multitude, in their solicitude to remove from them the Holy Scriptures, from the perusal of which 'as experience proves, more harm than good doth arise.'—At the same moment these compassionate shepherds filled the churches and public places with images, which themselves acknowledged to have been the objects of idolatrous regard!

I have frequently affirmed that the Tract writers, with all their pretended reverence for the early Church, actually take their lessons from the Romish Church, and at its worst times; and we have now a remarkable instance before us. These writers have

displayed a refined ingenuity in proving that the free circulation of the Scriptures among the people, is unnecessary—inexpedient, and even of dangerous consequence:—at the same time they have advanced, in a masked trench, and with many doublings, *as far as they dare*, toward an open profession of their desire to restore the practice of praying to the Dead; and they have silently opened the way for reinstating the palpable objects of Romish adoration. If the Homily before us had been written in the past year, it could not better have met the occasion.

"I beseech these reasoners to call to mind their own accustomed ordinance and decree, whereby they determine that the Scripture, though by God himself commanded to be known of all men, women and children, should not be read of the simple, nor had into the vulgar tongue, for that, as they said, it was dangerous, by bringing the simple people into errors. [*e.g.* Tracts on Reserve.] And will they not forbid images to be set up in churches and temples, which are not commanded, but forbidden most strictly by God, but let them still be there, yea, and maintain them also, seeing the people are brought, not into danger only, but indeed into most abominable errors, and detestable idolatry thereby! Shall God's word, by God commanded to be read unto all and known of all, for danger of heresy, as they say, be shut up! and idols and images, notwithstanding they be forbidden by God, and notwithstanding the danger of idolatry by them, shall they yet be set up, suffered, and maintained in churches and temples! O worldly and fleshly wisdom, ever bent to maintain the inventions and traditions of men by carnal reason, and by the same to disannul or deface the holy ordinances, laws and honour of the Eternal God, who is to be honoured and praised for ever, Amen."

Thus, in a few lines, is the drift and purport of the entire series of the 'Tracts' described, and reproved! What is it that these Writers have laboured at, but to disparage and to supersede the Scriptures—to remove them from the view of the laity, and, at the same time, to amuse and degrade the people with mummeries, and actually—so far as they have dared—with the visible incentives to idolatry!

Never has the Church been more defamed than it is by those who say that its Protestantism is 'ambiguous.' Against the

polytheism, as well as the *idolatry* of the Church of Rome, the Church of England protests with laborious argumentation. In the Second Part of the Homily on Prayer, after stating the conditions that must belong to the Being who should be the object of prayer, the preacher concludes that, as they are not found in Dead Saints, or Prophets, or the Virgin, prayer to such is unlawful.*—

"Whereupon we must only and solely pray unto God: for to say that we should believe, either in Angel or Saint, or in any other living creature, were most horrible blasphemy against God and his holy word."

The Homily then condemns the practice of praying to dead men on this ground—that we cannot pray to any being (absent from us) unless we "believe in him," in that sense in which we are instructed to "believe in God;" and inasmuch as it were "a most horrible blasphemy" to talk of so believing in any creature, *all prayer* to Dead Men, or to Angels, is unlawful, and implies what is blasphemous. The entire system of "invocation of saints," and *not* any special extravagances in the style of it, is utterly rejected by the Church;—and it is rejected, not merely with an energetic horror; but in the close method of a logical inference which admits of no evasion.

How has *a false religion* benumbed the consciences of those who, with such passages familiarly known to them, can yet affirm that *their* Church does not condemn saint worship, but only the abuses of it, and that its protest against this, and other popish corruptions, is ambiguous!

We must not imagine, it is said, that the Church would or could condemn *absolutely* a practice so ancient, and 'so respectably-supported.'—But is she not to be listened to when formally handling this very point?

"Let us not, therefore, put our confidence in the saints or martyrs that be dead. Let us not call upon them, nor desire help at their hands: but let us always lift up our hearts to God, in the name of his dear Son Christ, for whose sake, as God has promised to hear our prayer, so he will truly perform it."

* The strange reference made in this place to Augustine, will hereafter claim our particular attention.

With such a testimony against this "most horrible blasphemy" under their eyes, the Tract writers, and their champions, have dared to throw upon their own Church the reproach of not condemning it at all; or of doing so in ambiguous terms! I ask the candid reader to suppose the case, that some Dissenting assailant had ventured to affirm the very same thing; namely—That the Church of England so speaks of the 'invocation of saints' as rather to encourage than to repress the practice.—With what a thunder of indignation would so gross a calumny have been rebutted!—But this is precisely what Oxford divines are now saying! And while they say it, Rome exults, and foresees her triumph!

Equally decisive, although conjoined with a strange solecism in the appeal to Augustine and Chrysostom—an error we shall particularly examine—equally decisive, is the testimony against the more ancient practice of praying *for* the Dead.

"Now to entreat of that question, whether we ought to pray for them that are departed out of this world or no: Wherein, if we will cleave only unto the word of God, then must we needs grant that we have no commandment so to do."

And in consistency with its principle, of "cleaving only to the word of God," the Church of England has admitted no prayers of this kind, although they abound in the most ancient liturgies—into her own. The Church therefore is Protestant, in this very peculiar instance, where the 'consent of catholic Antiquity' is the most entire, and clear, on the other side. This practice, ancient as it is, and universally prevalent, yet lacks any "sure warranty of Holy Scripture"—and therefore, and on this sole and sufficient ground, it is rejected by the Church of England!

No case can exhibit the Protestantism of the Church in a more prominent manner. With ALL ANTIQUITY AGAINST HER, and nothing for her—but the BIBLE! she says—

"Let us not therefore dream, either of purgatory, or of prayer for the souls of them that be dead; but let us earnestly and diligently pray for them which are expressly commanded in Holy Scripture, namely, for Kings, &c." . . . .

Whether it be, as above, the exterior forms of religion, or its interior principles that are in question, the language of the

Homilies is, in an equal degree, bold and clear:—it is Scriptural, and, we hesitate not to say—*Protestant.* The style of these Sermons presents a striking contrast to the endless turns, and refinements, and subtilties of anti-protestant divinity. From *some* of the Fathers, a few passages *similar* to the following might be gathered; but none of these writers are in the same degree perspicuous, and simply scriptural. The Fathers are confused and inconsequential, from the perturbing influence of the many corruptions that had overlaid the Gospel:—Modern Romanists, and their English disciples, fall into a perplexed manner as the consequence of the painful endeavours they are compelled to make to convey anti-christian dogmas, in something like scriptural language. The ease and energy of Truth, they never reach.

"Therefore dearly beloved, if we chance at any time, through frailty of the flesh, to fall into sin—as it cannot be chosen but we must needs fall often—and if we feel the heavy burden thereof to press our souls, tormenting us with the fear of death, hell and damnation, let us then use that mean which God hath appointed, in his word, to wit, the mean of faith, which *is the only instrument of salvation now left unto us.* Let us stedfastly behold Christ crucified, with the eyes of our heart. Let us only trust to be saved by his death and passion, and to have our sins clean washed away through his most precious blood; that in the end of the world, when he shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead, he may receive us into his heavenly kingdom, and place us in the number of his elect and chosen people."—*Second* SERMON *of the Passion.*

We take up, as we proceed, certain testimonies against ancient and popish corruptions, to which we must hereafter appeal, when the subjects to which they relate come to be more particularly considered.

The Eucharist is "a commemoration," not a sacrifice; nor does the Church recognise any of those exaggerations of which the early, and the Nicene Fathers were the authors; and out of which the Church of Rome constructed her transubstantiation.

"But before all other things, this we must be sure of specially, that this *supper* be in such wise done and ministered, as our Lord and Saviour did, and commanded to be done; as his holy

apostles used it, and the good Fathers in the primitive Church frequented it."

Then comes a reference to Ambrose, which we shall hereafter consider.—

"Neither can he be devout, that otherwise doth presume than it was given by the author. We must take heed, lest, *of the memory*, it be made *a sacrifice*; lest of a communion, it be made a private eating; lest of two parts, we have but one; lest, applying it for the dead, we lose the fruit that be alive. Let us rather in these matters follow the advice of Cyprian in the like cases; [cited above, p. 433] that is, cleave fast to the first beginning, hold fast the Lord's tradition, do that in the Lord's *commemoration*, which he himself did, he himself commanded, and his apostles confirmed."

In a spiritual participation in this feast, and while the one Intercessor is regarded with a stedfast faith, we may expect the fulfilment of the promise, attached to the ordinance.—

"For this is to stick fast to Christ's promise made in his institution; to make Christ thine own; and to apply his merits unto thyself. Herein thou needest no other man's help, no other sacrifice or oblation, no sacrificing Priest, no mass, no means established by man's invention."—SERMON *concerning the Sacrament.*

"Christ commanded to his Church, a sacrament of his body and blood; they (Romanists) have changed it into a sacrifice for the quick and the dead. Christ did minister to his apostles, and the apostles to other men indifferently, under both kinds; they have robbed the lay people of the cup, saying that for them, one kind is sufficient. Christ ordained no other element to be used in baptism, but only water; whereunto when the word is joined, it is made, as St. Augustine saith, a full and perfect sacrament: but they, being wiser in their own conceit than Christ, think it is not well nor orderly done, unless they use conjuration (exorcism,) unless they hallow the water, unless there be oil, salt, spittle, tapers, and such other dumb ceremonies, serving to no use; contrary to the plain rule of St. Paul."—SERMON *for Whitsunday.*

It is well known that the "dumb ceremonies" here referred to, *and here condemned*, are of very high antiquity, and have been

only elaborated by the Romish Church. Tertullian's description of baptism, as practised at the close of the second, or commencements of the third century, includes most of the points reprobated in this Sermon.

Nothing can be more frivolous than the objection of late produced against Protestantism, that, as the term *Protestant* is of negative signification, a Protestant Church is therefore a Church believing nothing—and holding nothing, but the denial of error! By a Protestant Church, we mean one which, while it protests, when necessary, against the idolatry, superstition, and despotism of an apostate Church, holds, in their purity, all the great principles of the Gospel. The Church of England is as truly Protestant, when it makes no allusion whatever to Romish corruptions, as it is when it loudly denounces them.

A very significant instance is that of its entire, and yet SILENT rejection of the darling folly of the ancient Church—the doctrine and institution of religious celibacy. The course pursued by the Church of England, on this ground, is full of meaning; and it is such as utterly excludes the hypothesis lately advanced—That the English Church, in her Articles and Homilies, protests against nothing but the corrupt practices of Romanism in the middle ages; and that it is to be understood as embracing and allowing whatever is older than Popery!—

Will those who now avail themselves of this pitiful evasion affirm, that religious celibacy, as an *institution*, and as a *principle*, is—'a *popish* corruption;' on the contrary, they have themselves pleaded for its restoration on the very ground of its Antiquity, and of its catholicism. Here then is an instance logically complete.—Religious celibacy, both as a principle, and as a visible institution, prevailed universally, in the *ancient* Church, and it was applauded on all sides. The Church of England ought, therefore, to have applauded and perpetuated this great element of early Christianity; that is to say, it *ought*—if it had held the Tradition-doctrine; but holding the contrary—namely, the Protestant principle of adhering to the written commands of God, it has fairly dropped—'holy virginity,' and clerical celibacy, and monkery, and the entire scheme of fakir-piety, out of its arms!

Look to the "Sermon on the State of Matrimony," and compare it with *any* treatise, sermon, paragraph, you please, on the same subject, in the entire circle of ancient ecclesiastical literature, and the essential difference between the Church of England, and the Nicene Church, obtrudes itself upon notice. No such treatise, or sermon, or epistle, fails to insert a passage, fraught with the praises of that 'higher and holier state' which nuns and monks had chosen! A commendation of the 'life of angels' is invariably flung in the face of the married, when a preacher condescends to school these in their duties.

But where is any such corresponding passage in the Homily on Marriage?—it is wholly *clean* in this behalf:—it breathes the *real* purity of New Testament virtue:—no sepulchral stench of monastic abominations infects the page:—its homely advices, although they bear upon faults and disorders, do not gloze plague-spots! How often must a man who retains the feelings of a man, fling from him 'the Fathers,' in utter loathing, and in hot indignation! Not so the Book of Homilies, which is Protestant always, and whether it protests or is silent!

—"Therefore give thanks to God for his great benefit, in that ye have taken upon you this state of wedlock, and pray you instantly, that Almighty God may luckily defend and maintain you therein, that neither ye be overcome with temptations, nor with any adversity."

Evidence to the same effect is furnished by the three Sermons "on Repentance." These Sermons are *Protestant*, not merely in their refutation of the *popish* practice of auricular confession; but still more decisively so, in their absolute exclusion of the *ancient* doctrine and practice of expiatory penances, and voluntary torture. What is proper to a true Repentance is clearly and evangelically declared;—but not a word is added of the 'ascetic philosophy;' not a word commendatory of spiked girdles—hair shirts—erect postures—voluntary ulcers—five-day fasts—three hundred Psalms—prostrations—whips—mutilations—racks, and the like! These things, which were the grand means of obtaining the pardon of sin, and the favour of God in the scheme of ancient Christianity—these things are altogether rejected from that system of piety which is enunciated in the Book of Homilies.

Is not the Church of England, then, as truly Protestant in its omissions, as in its protests?—It is Protestant in its loud and righteous indignation;—and Protestant, not less, in its contemptuous silence:—Protestant when it denounces Rome as Antichrist; and Protestant, and even with a deeper emphasis, when it consigns to oblivion the errors of the more ancient apostasy. Protestant in snatching the truth, at utmost peril, from the jaws of the lion;—Protestant when it recovers the Gospel, unsullied, from amid the corruptions of gnosticised antiquity:—Protestant in its adherence to the Scriptures, as opposed to the blasphemies of Rome; and Protestant also, in that same adherence to Scripture, as opposed to the illusions of the Fathers!

THE LITURGY—PROTESTANT.

CONGREGATIONAL worship can never be altogether extemporaneous. To carry out the bold theory of the *constancy* of individual gifts to this extent, is not practicable; for even if the leaders of worship are endowed with devotional graces, enabling them to *pray*, unexceptionably, at all seasons—PRAISE, the nobler part of worship, must be liturgical; or it must be so, if it is to combine itself—according to its instinctive tendency, with rhythm and music.

We say the rejection, so far as it is possible to reject it, of *liturgical* worship, is not, in any specific sense—*Protestant;* although it be the carrying out a theory of worship which has sprung out of Protestantism. But on the other hand—to adopt liturgical worship; or rather to adhere to it, as the ancient, and nearly universal form of all worship; and while doing so, to pass over—and to leave in oblivion—and to blot out—and to remove, *every particle* of an existing liturgical system, which contained, or which might tend to restore, ancient and pernicious superstitions—to purge a people's worship of the accumulated corruptions of fourteen centuries—to do this, retaining at the same time whatever is scriptural and irreprehensible—to do this, is indeed

a *Protestant* course. In a most emphatic sense a Church is Protestant which has sifted a vast liturgical mass in such a manner as that the precious grain is still held, while all the chaff is scattered to the winds!

The Church of England then, in not only retaining liturgical worship; but in adhering to the matter and form of ancient liturgies, while purging them of their superstitious adjuncts, and their corrupt and polytheistic mixtures, has evinced its Protestantism in a mode more decisive, more argumentatively convincing, than those communions can have done that have steered a course wide away from the liturgical track.

As to the LITURGY of the Church, it is Protestant, not by protesting against popish and ancient superstitions, but by silently eschewing them:—a better protest, surely!

Daniel, when, from the heart of the towering idol-palaces of Babylon, and in his chamber, he prayed to the "God of heaven," was as good a Protestant as were his companions, when, before the king and court, they refused to bow to the golden divinity! So does the English liturgy at once rebuke the foul idolatries of Rome, and, with a severe silence, chastise the dangerous excesses of the ancient Church, by adhering strictly to the worship of God, under those very forms (to a great extent) with which the ancient Church, and the Romish, and the Greek, mingled their base alloys.

The uninformed—albeit devout, attendant upon the worship of the English Church, knows the service simply in its absolute merits; but he would regard it in another manner if he distinctly knew *from what associations* this "form of sound words" has been rescued, and from what dross it has been purified!

The actual character of the English Liturgy, we mean, the offices of congregational worship, including the "Communion," furnishes an inferential argument of the most decisive kind, as showing what is the spirit of the Church. To perceive the force of this argument, the facts should be considered, which are these:—

A disposition not to depart *unnecessarily*, or except at the demand of *principle*, from existing modes, is manifested throughout the structure and offices of the Episcopal Church. More-

over, it is known that the English Reformers—and of this tendency they have left indications enough—inclined to follow the Church of the mid period of the third century, as far as might be practicable:—dropping its errors, when perceived. The *ancient* was the model of the English Church; any instance therefore of wide departure from that model, affords a proof of the presence of some controlling law or rule, always held paramount to the rule of following Antiquity.

These facts are scarcely disputed. But in expunging from the existing, and, most of them, very ancient liturgical models, what was regarded as offensive, or as incompatible with the spirit and the professions of the Church, some distinctions were to be observed; and these should be taken into our account, in estimating the Protestantism of the Church.

If the mind of the Church had indeed been what it is now affirmed to be—'Catholic,' in the sense of the sixth or seventh century, it would have stopped short in rejecting from its devotional offices those shameless expressions of the polytheistic delusion, and in discouraging those enormities of image-worship, which distinguish the middle from the earlier ages.

The Church did indeed reject these enormities;—but did it stop there? On the contrary, it removed—root and branch, the entire scheme of the ancient demonolatry:—it abolished the shrine-and-relic offices—and the pilgrimages—and the celebrations, which are the broad characteristics of the religion of the Nicene age. Nay, it actually put a stop to saint-and-martyr miracles! cashiering these divinities, at a stroke, of their honours, of their revenues, and of their wonder-working powers! And all this was done, and this vast clearance was effected, notwithstanding the reverence which the Reformers professed to entertain toward those very Fathers, who had been the authors, or the zealous promoters of this worship, and of these nefarious delusions!

Here then becomes manifest the presence and operation of some very powerful counter motive. The Church of England, breaking its way through the entanglements of antiquity, has held another path! But this is not all, for we have next to notice an instance still more decisive in relation to the question, as to the Pro-

testantism of the Church; and this is, the absolute rejection of prayers 'for the repose of the Dead.'

The case, in this instance, is of the most convincing kind; and it may justly be regarded as an experimentum crucis, in our present argument. In disallowing the image-worship, and the saint-worship, of the Romish and Nicene Churches, the Reformers were easily determined by the gross offensiveness of these superstitions, and their glaring contrariety to the language, and to the spirit of the Scriptures. But it was otherwise in regard to the *apparently innocent*, and the more ancient practice of praying for the peace of souls departed. This usage—the fond superstition of the heart, enters into, and forms a prominent feature in all ancient Liturgies; and it is unquestionably of as high antiquity as any element of christian worship which is not authorised by the Inspired writings. In a word, the practice of praying *for* the dead, is wanting in no kind of support—except that of Holy Scripture! Here then we come to a crisis of that PRINCIPLE which is the paramount Law of the English Church.

If the question be put—Why should we not pray, in the congregation, for the repose of the deceased, inasmuch as the practice is 'catholic, and primitive;' and as ancient as the earliest existing monuments of christian worship? Why?—For this one and sufficient reason:—It is destitute of "warranty of Scripture." The adherence then of the Church to this Rule, *in such a case*, where all secondary reasons weighed on the other side, is a proof incontestable—it is a flaming proof of its Protestantism.

And how happily, how wisely, has the Church of England thus kept itself free from an error, apparently innocent; but which is in fact the germ of every species of superstition! The practice of praying for the Dead, albeit not explicitly forbidden in Scripture—any more than authorized, is clearly incompatible with evangelical doctrine; and it has in fact always supplanted that doctrine. The transition, moreover, from such a practice to that of praying *to* the Dead, is natural, and easy; and it has been constant. The process of this transition may readily be traced in several passages in Augustine, and other Nicene Fathers.—"We pray *for* the common Dead; but not *for* the Martyrs, who have already reached a height of felicity where they need no such aid:—instead of

wanting our intercessions, they enjoy so much favour at Court, that they are able to benefit *us*, by their intercessions: far from needing the suffrages of feeble mortals—they are themselves the princes of heaven! If so, how great are the boons they may be able, by their powerful supplications, to obtain for us.—Let us then court their favourable regards, with this very view. But where should we do this with so good a prospect of success, as at their shrines—even those holy coffers, where their sacred dust is conserved? Then, how well shall our wandering thoughts be chained to the meditation of the virtues of these our celestial patrons, while we gaze upon an image or picture, fairly representing the visible graces of the glorified being!"

Thus step by step, and each step easy, did the ancient Church descend from the natural, but unwarranted practice, of praying *for* the dead, to the last degradations—to the extreme blasphemies of idolatry! On this declivitous path the once-Christianized nations speedily reached the very lowest level to which human nature has ever sunk!

The Church of England, under the strongest inducements to the contrary, has purged its Liturgy most completely of this offence. Every Sunday, and in every parish church, does the Liturgy, by its exclusion of these pernicious superstitions, bear witness against—not Romanism only, but the corruptions of unanimous Antiquity!

"The entire abandonment of a custom so much at variance with divine truth was reserved for that brighter period in the history of the Church in which 'the Bible, the Bible alone,' began—perhaps for the first time since the commencement of the second century—to be recognised as the sole depositary of the principles of our religion, and the only unerring guide of christian practice." . . . "It cannot be denied that the mistaken practice in question (prayer for the Dead) was adapted to pave the way for the introduction of that false doctrine (Purgatory); and that, as a matter of fact, the fable of purgatory did follow in the train of the common and authorized practice of praying for the souls of the departed. The seeds of the later delusion were contained in the earlier error. And we ought to bear this in mind, in the formation of our own opinions, and in the regulation of our prac-

tice. Prayer for the dead ought to be rejected, not only as inexpedient, and as a custom harmless in itself, although liable to abuse, but as an unscriptural and erroneous practice, wrong in itself, to a certain extent, and directly tending, especially if sanctioned by public authority, to more serious follies and falsehoods." *

A simple phrase, an—ut patrocinia sentiamus ; or an—ora pro nobis, or a διὰ πρεσβειῶν, thrust into a form of public prayer, and which scarcely catches the ear amid the redundancies of a loaded Liturgy, may seem to be in a very low degree reprehensible. But the experience of ages proves, that these unwarranted expressions are seeds, thrown upon a rank soil, and which quickly spring up to choke whatever is pure and good. The English Reformers thoroughly understood this fact ; and therefore, from the ancient liturgical materials which they adopted, they carefully sifted every grain of this poisonous vegetation.

How is it then that Anglo-Catholics affirm the Church within which they minister to be not Protestant? Compare its Liturgy with those whence the substance of it was actually derived. All the difference between the two models is—a Protestant difference. The Liturgy of the English Church—if the Church were not Protestant, might, on many grounds—not necessary here to mention, be expected to approximate to that of the great Saint of Anglo-Catholics, Gregory I. But the Liturgy of this best of the popes, and 'last and least in the kingdom of heaven,' abounds with those polytheistic forms of which the English Liturgy does not contain a single particle. The contrast, on this ground, is complete:—whatever distinguishes the one from the other model of worship is some expression of those base superstitions from the thraldom of which the Reformation delivered the English Church.

'The Church *in* England is Catholic, not Protestant.' Be it so ; but the Church *of* England *is* Protestant.

THE ENGLISH LITURGY.	POPE GREGORY'S LITURGY.
ALL SAINTS DAY.	MISSA OMNIUM SS.
The Collect.	*Quotidianis diebus.*
O Almighty God, who hast knit together thine elect in one commu-	Fac nos, Domine, quæsumus, Sanctæ Mariæ semper Virginis sub-

* Riddle's "Christian Antiquities," pp. 390, 392.

nion and fellowship, in the mystical body of thy Son Christ our Lord; grant us grace so to follow thy blessed Saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys which thou hast prepared for them that unfeignedly love thee; through . . . .

sidiis attolli, et gloriosâ beatorum Apostolorum, Martyrum, et Confessorum atque Virginum, omniumque simul Sanctorum protectione defendi, ut dum eorum pariter quotidie memoriam celebramus, eorum pariter ab omnibus adversis semper protegamur auxilio. Per Dominum . . .

Are these prayers equivalents:—are they the varied expression only of the same feeling and doctrine? If they are not—they are not because the mind of the Church to which the one belongs, is not the mind of the seventh century;—nor even of the fourth; but that of the sixteenth. The prayer above cited, and placed in contrast with the English Collect, is from that "Liber Sacramentorum," of Gregory the Great, which is the object of the fond wishes and regrets of those who are compelled to confine themselves to the 'stammering accents' of the English Prayer Book.

The Church, as modelled by the Reformers, might indeed have dropped entirely the Commemoration of "all Saints."—Whether it might not have been better to take this course, is not now our question. But, *as it did not*—its Protestantism is so much the more strikingly exhibited, inasmuch as it abandons altogether its exemplars, and frames a Collect for the occasion which is liable to no shadow of reprehension.

Many of the Collects of the English service might thus be compared with the corresponding forms of Gregory's Liturgy; and always with the same result. On the one side we find what is Protestant and scriptural; on the other, that which is 'ancient,' indeed, and 'catholic,' and—idolatrous: or it is so, if we are to be guided by those definitions of idolatry which we meet with in the Book of Homilies; and some of which have above been cited. According to these definitions, the substance of idolatry, as well internal, as external, is contained in the following prayer, which is one only of very many to the same effect—

In quâlibet Ecclesiâ, in honore Sanctorum, quorum reliquias ibidem veneramur.

Concede, quæsumus, omnipotens Deus, ut sancta Dei genetrix Maria, sanctique tui Apostoli, Martyres, Confessores, Virgines, atque omnes Sancti, quorum reliquiæ in istâ continentur Ecclesiâ,

patrocinia nos ubique adjuvent, quatenus hîc in illorum præsenti suffragio tranquillâ pace in tuâ laude lætemur.

In what estimation with Anglo-Catholics, the Missal of pope Gregory may be held, I do not precisely know: but he himself is always spoken of by them as a high authority; nor does it appear that they have protested, any where, against the errors which he sustained and promoted. The Liturgy ascribed to him, or which bears his name, is however not more reprehensible than others that are, by a century, more ancient; and all of them, whether ancient or recent, stand forcibly contrasted with the English Liturgy, *in all those instances* which were points of dispute, between Protestant and Romish divines.

The Liturgy ascribed to Chrysostom may, or may not, in its present state, have passed under his review:—the point is of no importance in this instance. This Liturgy is one, and one of the most noted of the ancient Liturgies. Why then was it not followed by the compilers of the English Liturgy?—Because they were Protestants! The transubstantiation of this service, and its mummeries, I have already in this work adverted to.* Its polytheistic style is the same as that of the modern Romish "Canon of the Mass," in which the names of those divinities whose protection is implored, are recited. It should be said, however, that the final clause of the Romish prayer contains a turn which is not found in the more ancient Constantinopolitan; and which may seem to soften a little its objectionable character. That the identities and the differences may be presented to the eye of the reader the more easily, I place, in parallel columns, the two forms; and for the Greek, adopt the Latin version of the Benedictines.

THE ROMISH CANON OF THE MASS.	CHRYSOSTOM'S LITURGY.
Communicantes, et memoriam venerantes, imprimis gloriosæ semper Virginis Mariæ, Genitricis Dei et Domini nostri Jesu Christi: sed et beatorum Apostolorum ac Martyrum tuorum, Petri et Pauli, Andreæ, Jacobi, Joannis, Thomæ, Jacobi, Philippi, Bartholomæi, Matthæi,	Honorandi gloriosi prophetæ Præcursoris et Baptistæ Joannis, Sanctorum gloriosorum et percelebrium Apostolorum, patrum nostrorum pontificum; sancti Apostoli, primi martyris et archidiaconi Stephani; Sanctorum magnorum martyrum, Georgii, Demetrii, Theodori, et omnium sanc-

* Vol. I. p. 458.

Simonis et Thadæi: Sini, Cleti, Clementis, Xysti, Cornelii, Cypriani, Laurentii, Chrysogui, Joannis et Pauli, Cosmæ et Damiani, et omnium Sanctorum tuorum: quorum meritis precibusque concedas, ut in omnibus protectionis tuæ muniamur auxilio. Per eundem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

torum martyrum, sanctorum deiferorum (*θεοφόρων*) patrum nostrorum, Antonii, Enthymii et Sabæ sanctificati, Onuphrii, Arsenii, Athanasii in monte Atho et omnium Sanctorum; Sanctorum medicorum absque mercede, Cosmæ et Damiani, Cyri et Joannis Eleemosynarii, et Hermolai, Sampsonis et Diomedis, Thallalei et Tryphonis, et reliquorum; Sanctorum Deiparentum Joachim et Annæ; sancti (*illius, cujus est dies festus*) et omnium Sanctorum, quorum precibus protege nos, Deus, (by whose intercessions guard us—O God.)

These long recitals of names and epithets were much affected in the ancient liturgies. They were agreeably sonorous; and they served as the church-equivalents for those ponderous accumulation of titles which had come into use, civilly, during the ages of intellectual decay. Nothing can be more ludicrously turgid than are the modes of address, used even by persons of middle rank, one toward another during those times:—"Your Unanimity," "Your Humility," "Your Paternity," "Your Fraternity," "Your Charity," "Your Complaisantship;" as well as "Your Honour," and "Your Excellence"—not yet obsolete, and many other and similar absurdities of a barbaric time, had all their counterparts in the Church, and all resounded in its Liturgies.

Of the many *subordinate* merits of the English Liturgy this—in point of taste, as well as in point of religious propriety, is not the least—the singular modesty, and sobriety, the chasteness of language—most seemly when men are standing in the presence of God, which is used in naming or designating persons, secular and ecclesiastical. And as to that trumpeting of the names and titles of the saints in heaven—so offensive in every way to religious minds, the English Liturgy is absolutely free from it.

Compare the LITANY, as it stands in our Prayer Book, with the Litany in the Roman Missal:—compare the two models—theology apart, on the ground of the *devotional effect* of each. In the very midst of this solemn service, and *next after* the prayer—"O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity. ." follow these petitions—How debasing! how blasphemous the combination!—"Holy Mary,

pray for us. Holy mother of God, pray for us. Holy Virgin of Virgins, pray for us. Holy Thomas, pray for us. Holy James, pray for us. Holy Philip, pray for us. Holy Bartholomew, pray for us. Holy Matthew, pray for us. Holy Simon, pray for us. Holy Thaddæus, pray for us. Holy Matthias, pray for us. Holy Barnabas, pray for us. Holy Luke, pray for us. Holy Mark, pray for us. All the Holy Apostles and Prophets pray for us. All the Holy Disciples of the Lord, pray for us. All the Holy Innocents, pray for us. Holy Stephen, pray for us. Holy Laurence, pray for us. Holy Vincent, pray for us. Holy Fabian and Sebastian, pray for us. Holy John and Paul, pray for us. Holy Cosmas and Damian, pray for us. Holy Gervasius and Protasius, pray for us. All Holy Martyrs, pray for us. Holy Sylvester, pray for us. Holy Gregory, pray for us. Holy Ambrose, pray for us. Holy Augustine, pray for us. Holy Jerome, pray for us. Holy Martin, pray for us. Holy Nicholas, pray for us. All Holy Pontiffs * and Confessors, pray for us. All Holy Doctors, pray for us. Holy Antony, pray for us. Holy Benedict, pray for us. Holy Bernard, pray for us. Holy Dominic, pray for us. Holy Francis, pray for us. All Holy Priests and Levites, pray for us. All Holy Monks and Hermits, pray for us. Holy Mary Magdalene, pray for us. Holy Lucia, pray for us. Holy Agnes, pray for us. Holy Cecilia, pray for us. Holy Agatha, pray for us. Holy Catharine, pray for us. Holy Anastasia, pray for us. All Holy Virgins and Widows, pray for us. All the Holy Men of God and Women, intercede for us."

Irrespectively of the dogmatic error and impiety involved in this 'respectable invocation of Saints,' the *physical* influence of it—the pealing of this long roll of swelling words—upon the imagination, and the affections, was to lull the soul and to withdraw it from communion with the Supreme object of worship:—it could not but operate to scatter the affections, as well as to distract the attention;—in fact, it has always had the effect to debase—to debauch—to bring down the hearts of men to the level of polytheism. Like, and along with, the images, and the pictures, and the embroideries, and the gildings, and the music,

* How many intercessors of *this* class, could the Church reckon upon?

and the lights, and the fumes of incense, these sonorous invocations are the elements of a worship contrived to be, in the highest possible degree, sensuous; and which, enchaining the fancy for an hour, benumbs the moral sense, and leaves the heart in undisturbed possession of its earthly tendencies.

Such is the Roman Worship;—and such, with unimportant variations, that of the Greek Church; and those who have taken the pains to inform themselves what it is from which the Reformers have exempted the English Church, will know how to feel toward their benefactors, as well as how to think of those who are disparaging its pure worship, and are compassing the restoration of every ancient delusion!

None of those specious apologies which, in modern times, have been offered in support of saint-worship, were listened to by those who reformed the English Liturgy. *They* were personally acquainted with this corrupt worship, in its actual operation upon the mass of the people; and they knew that, harmless as it may seem in the abstract, it infallibly works the perdition of the community within which it prevails.

Religiosus cultus Sanctis tributus ab Ecclesiâ, Deo injuriosus non esse luculenter conspicitur, quidquid Novatores (Reformers) obganniant; in Deum namque terminatur, cujus magnalia in sanctis ejus amicis laudamus.

So says the learned and laborious Asseman; (Codex Liturgicus Eccl. Univ. t. iv. p. 10.) and much more, to the same purport. But what says all experience? Experience confirms, with a melancholy emphasis, the truth, That those who make to themselves a Religion other than that which God has prescribed in his Word, wander further and further, at every step, upon a pathless and overshadowed field of snares and pitfalls.

Collections such as that of Asseman,* afford the means of estimating—and apart from such comparisons we cannot duly estimate, the high merits of the English Liturgy; and especially the merit which belongs to it as a *selection*, governed in the most sovereign manner by the Scriptural Principle which the compilers—AS REFORMERS—had adopted. Whether they looked to the offices of

* Codex Liturgicus Ecclesiæ Universæ. J. Al. Assemanus. Romæ: 1751.

the contemporary Churches—Eastern and Western, or explored the most ancient formularies of worship, they still found the same stumbling-blocks of idolatry in their path, and which they carefully avoided and removed.

The Collects exhibit the caution with which every approach toward this precipice is shunned, often by the turn of a phrase, which might have passed unnoticed: and how do they exhibit that religious care in the total exclusion of those forms which constitute a principal element of the ancient Liturgies! The worship of the creature, rendered the more offensive to God by the intermixture of the divine names, such as the following, is not merely condemned in the *Homilies*, but it is utterly excluded from the *Services* of the English Church.*

In natal. Sanctæ Perpetuæ et Felicitatis.

Da nobis, Domine Deus noster, Sanctorum Martyrum palmas incessabili veneratione venerari, ut quos dignâ mente non possumus celebrare; humilibus saltem frequentibus obsequiis veneremur. Per . . .

This, be it remembered, is not *popery* in any distinctive sense —it is Ancient Christianity;—it is a prayer from the "Old Roman Missal"—a Liturgy of high antiquity. What can we mean by trusting in the power and merits of a creature, if such trust, comprising all that is sinful in the sin of idolatry, be not implied in phrases such as these.—

Te, quæsumus, Domine, famulantes, prece humili auxilium implorantes, et Beatæ semper Virginis Mariæ nos gaudia comitentur solemniis: cujus præconiâ ac meritis nostra deleantur chirographa peccatorum.

It might indeed have been well to drop entirely those commemorations which had been so intimately, and for so many ages polluted by idolatry.—Nevertheless, in retaining them, nominally, the Church has most distinctly shown her determined rejection of whatever might give occasion to a guilty perversion of her

* The very significant statements and insinuations advanced by the writer of the 86th Tract, on this subject, I shall endeavour to notice in a future number.

institutions. In candour, or mere justice, let the two Collects following be compared, which attach to the same festival.

THE ENGLISH LITURGY.

SAINT MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS.

O Everlasting God, who hast ordained and constituted the services of angels and men in a wonderful order; mercifully grant, that as thy holy angels always do thee service in heaven, so by thy appointment they may succour and defend us on earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE OLD ROMAN MISSAL.

ORATIONES IN SANCTI ARCHANGELI MICHAELIS. III. KAL. OCT.

Beati Archangeli Michaelis interventione suffulti, supplices te, Domine, deprecamur: ut quos honore prosequimur; contingamus et mente. Per . . .

Secreta. Munus populi tui, Domine, quæsumus dignanter adsume; quod non nostris meritis, sed Sancti Archangeli tui Michaelis deprecatione sit gratum. Per . . .

If the bare commemoration which the English Church admits, be not open to any severe reprehension, it must be admitted that the Collect itself is as blameless as any prayer can be. The parallel form of the ancient Roman Missal embraces the most pernicious elements of Christianized paganism; and if collated with the apostolic doctrine of the mediation and meritorious intercession of the One Mediator, it does not fall short of a denial of the first principles of the Gospel economy. Those who taught the people thus to confide in the merits, and to implore the intercession of Michael the Archangel, had lost—we cannot hesitate to say so—they had lost even the faintest perception, of Christian truth! Such men were polytheists and idolaters, as truly as are the worshippers of Brahma.

It is to be observed, that though, in these ancient Liturgies, the public prayer is addressed to God; yet, at the same era, the devotions of the people, and whenever any special boon was sought for, were addressed *immediately* to the Saint, Angel, or Martyr; and, on special occasions, at the shrine, and while the prostrate petitioner fixed his eye upon some visible symbol of the divinity, so supplicated.

What it is which those desire who resent the devastations of the Reformation, and sigh over the rejected worship of the ancient Church, is best understood by actual comparisons.

THE ENGLISH LITURGY.

SAINT ANDREW'S DAY.

The Collect.

Almighty God, who didst give such grace unto thy holy apostle, Saint Andrew, that he readily obeyed the calling of thy Son Jesus Christ, and followed him without delay; Grant unto us all, that we, being called by thy holy Word, may forthwith give up ourselves obediently to fulfil thy holy commandments; through the same, ...

THE OLD ROMAN MISSAL.

IN NATAL. EJUSDEM (SANCTI ANDREÆ.)

Majestatem tuam, Domine, supplicitur exoramus: ut sicut Ecclesiæ tuæ Sanctus Andreas Apostolus extitit Prædicator et Rector: ita sit pro nobis perpetuus Suffragator. Per . . .

Beatus Andreas pro nobis, Domine, quæsumus, imploret apostolus: ut et nostris reatibus absoluti, cunctis etiam periculis eruamur.

Secreta. Sacrificium nostrum tibi, Domine, quæsumus, Beati Andreæ precatio sancta conciliet: et ut cujus honorem solemniter exhibetur; meritis efficiatur acceptum. Per . . .

Protegat nos, Domine, sæpius Beati Andreæ Apostoli, repetita, solemnitas: ut cujus patrocinia sine intermissione recolimus: perpetuâ defensione sentiamus. Per...

The result is the same when we turn from the Western to the Eastern Church; and with whatever recommendations of high antiquity, or even of apostolic origin, the Liturgies of the latter might present themselves, the Compilers of the English Liturgy rejected without scruple, and in the most complete manner, whatever in them is plainly unscriptural and superstitious.

We now glance, for a moment, at the Jerusalem Missal, *attributed* to 'St James the Apostle, and brother of the Lord!'

Was it indeed St. James the Apostle, who taught the people to salute 'The most holy! the Immaculate, the most glorious, the most blessed Mary, our Lady, Mother of God—always Virgin'—or to implore her intercession, and that of all saints, that 'by their prayers and intervention, we may obtain mercy.'?

This 'ancient' Liturgy contains Hymns to the Virgin, embodying the most absolute and unqualified worship. It is manifest, in reading these compositions, that *the effect upon the ear* was much regarded. They are sonorously magniloquent and rotund; and when conjoined with music, must have had a very powerful effect, of a physical kind. Let us imagine the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, *i. e.* that erected by Constantine, lit up—

crowded with worshippers, prostrate on the pavement—a numerous choir of singing priests; and this anthem swelling from the chancel!—

"Hail, Mary, full of grace. The Lord be with thee! Blessed art thou among women, and Blessed is the fruit of thy womb! for thou didst bring forth the Saviour of our souls!

"*Then the Priest shall aloud exclaim,*

"And most chiefly (O Lord be mindful of) the most sacred, the immaculate, the over all [the more than all] blessed, the very glorious Mary, our Lady, Mother of God, and always Virgin!

"*The Singers.*

"Fit it is, that, as truly Blessed, we should salute the Theotokos—the ever happy, and every-way blameless, and the mother of our God;—more honourable than Cherubim, and more glorious than Seraphim, who without corruption brought forth God the Word: Thee truly the Theotokos, we magnify!

"*And again they sing,*

"In thee, O full of grace, all creatures rejoice! the company of angels—the race of man; thou who art a consecrated temple—a rational paradise—the boast of the virgin order—of whom God was made flesh, and he who was from eternity became a child, and our God. For he made thy womb his throne; and *τὴν σὴν γαστέρα πλατυτέραν οὐρανῶν ἀπειργάσατο*!* In thee—O Full of Grace, all the creation rejoices! GLORY BE TO THEE!"—*Asseman*, t. v. p. 45.

Such was the worship which the English Reformers ('let them be anathema') rudely despoiled of all its graces; bringing it down to that cold Protestantism which can find its support only in the Scriptures!

The ancient Syrian Liturgy offers still the same elements of the universal apostasy. In the Communion the Priest thus implores the Mother of God!—

"Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, for me entreat thy Son, the only-begotten, who was born of thee, that my sins and faults being remitted, he may accept at my unworthy and sinful hands this Sacrifice which by my vileness is offered on this altar,

* I leave this clause, untranslated, to the admirers of Antiquity!

through thy intercession, O most Holy Mother!"—*Asseman*, t. v. p. 186.

There can be little need to multiply citations of this kind. The worship of many divinities, and especially of the Queen of Heaven, is the characteristic of most, or all of them, Eastern and Western;—Greek—Coptic, Syrian. The learned Editor of this Liturgic collection justly says—in defence of his own Church, against the exceptions of the Reformers—Novatores—that, if the Romish Church be indeed superstitious and idolatrous, she is so in company with *all other Churches*—whether ancient or more recent!

Si Ecclesiam Romanam in errores, et superstitionem prolapsam, atque Babylonem, seu meretricem illam, quæ sui prostitutione orbem corrupit, ut Johannes in Apocalypsi vidit, dictitent, videant quæso Christianas omnes Ecclesias Antiochenas, Constantinopolitanas, Alexandrinas, ac Hierosolymitanas iisdem (quos aiunt) erroribus ac superstitionibus plenas esse, et semper quidem fuisse, cum in Liturgiis, semper mirabili consentione, Ecclesiæ istæ secum contesserarint.—*Codex Liturgicus*, t. vi. p. xcix.

It is indeed true that, with a marvellous uniformity, these Liturgies, various as they are in their forms, style, and ritual adjuncts, do agree in those features which distinguish them, one and all, from the offices of the Reformed Churches.

In the very heart of this CODEX LITURGICUS, stands the Communion Service of the English Prayer Book, reprinted from the text of Sam. Mearne, 1681. It is associated with that of the other 'Schismatic,' or pseudo-churches—the Lutheran and Calvinistic! The manner in which it is introduced by the learned editor, and his remarks upon its 'heretical' character, are very pertinent to our immediate argument.

In bringing forward the LITURGIA ANGLICANA (I abbreviate the passage) he says—From the time when Henry VIII. in the parliament held in the year 1531, declared himself head of the English Church, the (Romish) Liturgy, by little and little, was set aside; and a new one introduced, in conformity with the new doctrine broached by Luther and other innovators. The Liturgy compiled in Edward VIth's time, and published by authority, 1549, was animadverted upon by Calvin and others, in conse-

quence of which another was prepared, and published, 1552, which continued in use till the king's death, in July of the following year. On the accession of his sister Mary, the schism of the English Church being renounced, the ancient catholic missals were restored. But again, at her death, 1558, when Elizabeth succeeded, the schism was renewed by her, and the Liturgy of her brother Edward restored. Nevertheless, that she might deceive the Catholics, she caused some alterations to be made, and especially expunged the words—"From the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome, and from his detestable errors, deliver us, O Lord;"—and the priestly vestments were also commanded to be resumed. Moreover the celebration of the communion was so managed as that the doctrine of transubstantiation, and of the real presence, should remain undetermined, in such sort that both heretics and catholics might, without violating their consciences, take part in it." Some have affirmed (the fable) that this Liturgy did not displease Pius IV., and that, if Elizabeth would have acknowledged the supremacy of the see of Rome, he would have authorized it. This Liturgy, with certain slight alterations, was printed with the Royal authority by James I. But the editor declines enumerating the variations and the commotions which have attended the English Church, from that period, and which have been so well stated by the illustrious Bossuet.

It were an endless task, he continues, to repeat all those forms of celebrating the Holy Communion which, at different times, and in different places, the Reformers—Novatores—have devised; or to compile a history of those sacramental observances which have followed from overstepping the boundaries placed by the Fathers, and from the license that has been used in this behalf:—as reeds shaken by the wind, are these schismatic Liturgies! But all of them may easily be proved to be spurious; as thus,—

—These Liturgies [of the Reformed Churches] one and all, are repugnant to the Word of God—*either written*, or HANDED DOWN—tradito—as well as to the usages of the Catholic Church; nor have they issued from any legitimate Church authorities:—in a word, they are not—of the Roman Catholic Church!" (The editor here cites Joseph Bingham—writing against Latitudinarians and Independents, in support of his position—That a legitimate Liturgy

must proceed, not from private, but from a public and lawful authority.)

As to the English Liturgy—illegitimitatem multa probant: First of all, that it is appointed by the royal authority, and confirmed by Parliament. (The pointed queries urged by the learned Editor, in this place, I leave Anglo-Catholics who, admitting the writer's principles, *yet conform* to the Church "as by Law Established"—to reply to as they can.)

But even to waive this objection—the English Liturgy may be proved illegitimate in other modes.—It is wanting in many things which have entered into all Christian Liturgies.—Multa desiderantur, quæ in omnibus Christianis Liturgiis præscripta semper fuere—to wit (and to name only a sample)—The English Liturgy abrogates—the Worship of the Saints, and the commemoration of them. Prayers for the dead are not found in it. There is no invocation of the Holy Spirit, that the Bread may become the Body, and the Wine the Blood of Christ. The 'secret' (private prayer of the Priest) is taken away, and no part of the service is to be recited by the priest, in a whisper, and which is not heard by the people. Moreover the truth (transubstantiation) of the eucharistic sacrifice is either not discerned, or it is so ambiguously expressed, that Lutheran heretics, as well as Catholics, may appeal to the same forms, in attestation of their doctrines, severally!

This learned writer's argument in proof of the spuriousness of the English Liturgy, and of the consequent inefficacy of the sacraments of this 'schismatic Church,' cannot be refuted by Anglo-Catholics. For they themselves denounce the interference of secular authorities in ecclesiastical affairs;—and they proclaim the principle that it is not Scripture alone, but Scripture and Tradition which should be our rule; and they profess their adherence to the traditions, and decrees, and usages, of the first six centuries. But the Liturgy—or, let us now confine ourselves to the "Communion"—the Communion Service, is, what it is, and, so far as it differs from all ancient Liturgies, it does so, on the authority of a Protestant Church—by law established, and subject to the Queen's supremacy! Moreover this "Order of the Administration of the Lord's Supper," does exclude those very elements

of worship which have the unanimous sanction of Antiquity—that Antiquity, *specially*, which Anglo-Catholics recognise, and profess to hold in the highest reverence!

There is no way of escape in this instance. The worship of the Saints, and the commemoration of them, are principal features in all those Eucharistic liturgies, which come within the conditions of the present argument. And as to Prayers for 'the repose of Souls,' no practice which is ancient, but not scriptural, can be more amply sustained than this is—It is of high antiquity—it is universal;—or the exceptions are not such as can warrant a departure from it, consistently with the principle of an adherence to Catholic Antiquity.

Not merely does the Church of England *omit* these prayers;—it *rejects* them: it deliberately sets at nought the authority of Catholic Antiquity; and as deliberately it guides itself by another law—that of a strict adherence to the Scriptures! How it is that Anglo-Catholics reconcile their principle, with their practice, in conforming to this 'defective service,' I have no wish to inquire; but must profess to believe that, when *all the facts of the case* come to be better and more generally understood, by the well-informed and conscientious members of the Episcopal Church, so extreme an inconsistency will excite a loud expression of the indignation it so well deserves; and such an expression of feeling it will not be possible to contemn or to resist.

Even if the Book of Homilies, throughout which the feeling of the Reformers is so decisively expressed, did not exist, or if these compositions were not in any sense authoritative, the Liturgy alone—the Form of Morning and Evening Prayer, with the Collects and the Communion, must be allowed, when compared with all pre-existing Liturgies, to exhibit in an unequivocal manner the influence of Protestant opinions, and of that scriptural simplicity which was characteristic of the Reformation.

Every instance of omission, and every substitution of one

phrase for another, in the forms that are retained, has this one reason—adherence to Scripture, and the rule of rejecting whatever could not be properly sustained by an appeal to that sole authority.

This law of the Reformation makes itself silently manifest on every page of the Prayer-Book;—and the more so, when we come to be informed of the characteristics of that impure worship which had universally prevailed during the preceding eleven hundred years. But in looking into the Homilies, we find, at once, this law professed in the plainest and the boldest terms. He must be infatuated indeed who can peruse these vigorous compositions, and yet doubt what was the mind of the writers (and therefore the mind of the Church which adopts them) as to the great questions that were agitated in the sixteenth century.

No writings, human or divine, can preclude perverse interpretations, and therefore *any thing* may be affirmed concerning the purport or intention of the Homilies. It may be said that they do not condemn the errors of the ancient Church—that they do not denounce popery—or that they favour the pretensions of Mahomet!

We may well decline to refute any such calumnies; instead of combating perversity, we spread the page open, and appeal to the eyes and consciences of all who have no theory to maintain. We are content to take a jury any where, from among well informed persons—who have been no parties in ecclesiastical feuds.—We are earnestly desirous that the whole of the evidence should be cited and sifted; and this body of evidence must include, not merely the Formularies of the Church, as they stand;—but the ecclesiastical materials from the midst of which they were drawn, or snatched.

But if we suppose it to be granted that the Homilies, the Articles, the Form of Daily Prayer, and the Communion, are incontestably Protestant, what then will it behove us to say concerning certain expressions occurring in the sacramental or other offices, or in the Catechism, and which appear to lead us back rather to the dim eras of antiquity, than to the bright apostolic day?

Certainly, we are not to say, on such occasions, that these incongruous particles are remnants of *popery*. An almost utter ignorance of ecclesiastical antiquity is betrayed by those who repeat such an allegation. Rome has no specific claim to these—call them, errors, which indicate the extreme reluctance of the English Reformers to abandon the guidance of the church of the third century, where it might be followed under some plausible show of consistency with Scripture.

Let the utmost be affirmed which can be alleged with any regard to truth or candour, namely—That the English Reformers, from whatever motives, did not carry out their own clearly avowed principles to the full extent of a theoretic consistency. Even if it be so, the fact remains certain—that they *did* boldly avow principles, the unobstructed operation of which would have imparted a Protestant character, in the fullest sense, to the Offices, as well as to the Articles of the Church.—They solemnly protested their *intention* to submit to the sole authority of Holy Scripture; and they gave convincing evidence of the sincerity of this profession, by rejecting and denouncing those things as *corruptions*, which came to them recommended by the unanimous voice of the ages whereof themselves were wont to speak with respectful affection.

Our conclusion then must be—if justice and candour are regarded—Not that the Formularies of the Church are pervaded by no one consistent principle—Not that the exceptions should be taken as the rule, and the rule for the exceptions—Not that a few phrases should be interpreted as the indications of a concealed purpose; and that the most explicit affirmations are to be held as hypocritical.—Not so; but rather that, inasmuch as the Formularies of the Church are compilations prepared by uninspired men, they partake of, and exhibit, those conditions of imperfection, and of inconsistency, which attach to whatever has not come immediately from Heaven.

In what is yet before us, in pursuing this subject, we shall not attempt to tax and torture the powers of ingenious sophistry for the purpose of proving that imperfections are excellences. We shall follow a less arduous, and a safer path, in endeavouring to

show that such flaws are *flaws only;* and we may perhaps venture a step further, in presuming to point out the mode of their easy and safe removal—a removal which would leave the Protestant Church of England—*such* without a *single* point of reasonable exception, and strong by the consolidation of its imperishable materials.

END OF VOL. II.

R. CLAY, PRINTER, BREAD STREET HILL.

SUPPLEMENT TO No. V.

IT is my intention in this Supplement, not merely to furnish the reader with the means of forming his own opinion as to the fairness and accuracy of the citations contained in the Fifth Number, but to supply a mass of additional evidence in support, or in illustration of, the principal allegations therein made. I shall therefore in this instance, at one and the same time, relieve myself from much of the responsibility which I have sustained in conducting the argument; and, so far as my limits permit, constitute the learned reader the umpire of the controversy; nor do I here think of the few erudite persons who are already familiar with the remains of ecclesiastical antiquity, and who have access to them (these, in fact, need no aid from the author) but all readers, whether lay or clerical, to whom the Latin and Greek languages are in a fair degree familiar; and who yet may not have the opportunity to examine the writers in question.

Especially with a view to the satisfaction of such readers, I am now about to adduce the original passages more at length than might otherwise appear strictly necessary, in order to exclude the suspicion that insulated sentences have been picked from the context, in such a manner as to produce an impression not borne out by it, and which would have been much modified, or entirely reversed by more ample citations. As to Salvian and Palladius, our two principal witnesses in this instance, it is not even the entire pages now to be adduced that can do justice to the argument that has been founded on their evidence. Strongly feeling this, I can only hope that some of my readers may, by these citations, be induced to peruse these authors for

themselves. Such a perusal of Salvian cannot fail to inspire confidence in his integrity, seriousness, intelligence, and competency, as a reporter of the state of things around him. As to Palladius, the effect of a perusal of the entire book can be nothing but amazement in the minds of those who, from the loose statements of modern church writers, or from the partial representations of the determined admirers of antiquity, have been led to think of the religious system of the third and fourth century as if it were something essentially unlike the folly and superstition of the middle ages; and something nearly identical with the christianity of the modern protestant church. If there are any who still entertain such a belief, they should think it a duty to read, as well Palladius, as the other contemporary writers of the same class.

To these writers I shall, in this Supplement, make such references as may serve to save time and trouble to any reader who will follow my recommendation. In a word, I now propose to do everything which a writer may be expected to do whose only fear is—lest inquiry should be quashed, and whose hope of carrying the convictions of impartial persons rests enirely upon a thorough investigation of the evidence to which he appeals.

Although it were admitted that nothing can be conclusive in the present momentous controversy but the production of the original evidence; yet it is natural that a writer who has ventured to aver much more than has usually been affirmed concerning the origin of the errors ordinarily attributed to the romish church should gladly avail himself of the support of highly reputed modern writers, to the same effect.

Some have been startled, as by a novelty, in finding it affirmed that the predicted apostasy which they have always supposed to be Rome's own, attaches fully, in each of its characteristics, to the church of the nicene era. But have such persons never read bishop Newton's Dissertations on the Prophecies? Whatever differences of opinion there may fairly be room for in relation to some of this learned writer's expositions, the dissertation to which I am now referring (*the twenty-third*, on St. Paul's Prophecy of the Apostasy of the Latter Times) involves scarcely a particle of what can be regarded as questionable:—it is a brief statement

of facts, the proof of which is easy and abundant. Any reader who has access to the Fathers may satisfy himself in an hour, that the bishop's affirmations were advanced on good grounds, and that they are indisputable. Yet these affirmations involve the substance of whatever the writer of these pages has asserted concerning the early development of the (so called) romish superstitions. Let those who have resented with so much vivacity what I have already written, give themselves the task of showing that bishop Newton has calumniated the Fathers of the fourth century. Before relinquishing my present task I propose to cite latin and greek enough to prove that he might have spoken of them in a still more decisive tone of reprehension. The following passages, quoted from the Dissertation above named, should be carried in the reader's recollection as he proceeds in examining the evidence presently to be adduced.

"The 'forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats,' are circumstances only, and appendages of the great apostasy, and not the great apostasy itself, which is always represented in Scripture as 'spiritual fornication,' or idolatry, of one kind or other, and it is not likely that the apostle should specify the circumstantial errors, and omit the main and capital crime. In this place it is not the great apostasy that he is describing, but the characters and qualities of the authors and promoters of it. Castalio therefore very properly translates, εν ὑποκρισει ψευδολογων 'through the dissimulation of men speaking lies.' 'I have added men,' says he, 'lest "speaking lies," and what follows, should be referred to demons or devils.' It is plain then that the great apostasy of the latter times was to prevail 'through the hypocrisy of liars, having their conscience seared with a hot iron:' and hath not the great idolatry of Christians, and the worship of the dead particularly, been diffused and advanced in the world by such instruments and agents, who have (Rom. i. 25) 'changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever?' It is impossible to relate, or enumerate all the various falsehoods and lies which have been invented and propagated for this purpose; the fabulous books forged under the names of apostles, saints, and martyrs; the fabulous legends of their lives, actions, and sufferings, and deaths; the fabulous miracles ascribed to their sepulchres, bones, and other relics; the fabulous dreams and revelations, visions and apparitions of the dead to the living; and even the fabulous saints, who never existed but in the imagination of their worshippers: And all these stories the monks, the priests, the bishops of the church, have imposed and intruded upon mankind, it is difficult to say whether with greater artifice or cruelty, with greater confidence or hypocrisy and pretended sanctity; a more hardened face, or a more hardened conscience. The history of the church, says Pascal, is the history of truth; but as written by bigoted papists, it is rather the history of lies. So well doth this prophecy coincide and agree with the preceding one, that the coming of the man of sin should be 'after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.'

"A farther character of these men is given in the following words 'Forbidding to marry.' The same hypocritical liars, who should promote the worship of demons, should also prohibit lawful marriage. Saturnius, or Saturninus, who flourished in the second century, was, as Theodoret affirms, the first Christian, who declared matrimony to be the doctrine of the devil, and

exhorted men to abstain from animal food. But according to Irenæus and Eusebius, Tatian, who had been a disciple of Justin Martyr, was the first author of this heresy; at least he concurred in opinion with Saturninus, and Marcion; and their followers were called the Continents, from their continence in regard to marriage and meats. The Gnostics likewise, as Irenæus and Clemens Alexandrinus inform us, asserted that to marry and beget children was of the devil; and under pretence of continence were impious both against the creature and the Creator, teaching that men ought not to bring into the world other unhappy persons, nor supply food for death. Other heretics in the third century advanced the same doctrines, but they were generally reputed heretics, and their doctrines were condemned by the church. The council of Eliberis in Spain, which was held in the year of Christ 305, was I think the first, that by public authority forbade the clergy to marry, and commanded even those who were married to abstain altogether from their wives. The council of Neocæsarea, in the year 314, only forbade unmarried presbyters to marry, on the penalty of degradation. At the first general council of Nice, in the year 325, a motion was made to restrain the clergy from all conjugal society with their wives, but it was strongly opposed by Paphnutius, a famous Egyptian bishop, who yet himself was never married; and to him the whole council agreed, and left every man to his liberty as before. But the monks had not yet prevailed; the monks soon overspread the eastern church, and the western too: and as the monks were the first who brought single life into repute; so they were the first also, who revived and promoted the worship of demons. It is a thing universally known, that one of the primary and most essential laws and constitutions of all monks, whether solitary or associated, whether living in deserts or in convents, is the profession of single life, to abstain from marriage themselves, and to discourage it all they can in others. It is equally certain that the monks had the principal share in promoting and propagating the worship of the dead; and either out of credulity, or for worse reasons, recommended it to the people with all the pomp and power of their eloquence in their homilies and orations. Read only some of the most celebrated fathers; read the orations of Basil on the martyr Mamas, and on the forty martyrs; read the orations of Ephraim Syrus on the death of Basil, and on the forty martyrs, and on the praises of the holy martyrs; read the orations of Gregory Nazianzen on Athanasius, and on Basil, and on Cyprian; read the orations of Gregory Nyssen on Ephraim Syrus, and on the Martyr Theodorus, and on Meletius, bishop of Antioch; read the sixty-sixth and other homilies of Chrysostom; read his orations on the martyrs of Egypt, and other orations: and you will be greatly astonished to find, how full they are of this sort of superstition, what powers and miracles are ascribed to the saints, what prayers and praises are offered up to them. All these were monks, and most of them bishops too, in the fourth century; and the superstitious worship which these monks begun, the succeeding monks completed, till at length the very relics and images of the dead were worshipped as much as the dead themselves. The monks then were the principal promoters of the worship of the dead in former times: and who are the great patrons and advocates of the same worship now? Are not their legitimate successors and dependents, the monks and priests and bishops of the church of Rome? And do not they also profess and recommend single life, as well as the worship of saints and angels? As long ago as the year 386, pope Siricius held a council of eighty bishops at Rome, and forbade the clergy to cohabit with their wives. This decree was confirmed by pope Innocent at the beginning of the fifth century, and the celibacy of the clergy was fully decreed by Gregory the Seventh, in the eleventh century; and this hath been the universal law and practice of the church ever since. Thus hath the worship of demons and the prohibition of marriage constantly gone hand in hand together: and as they who maintain the one, maintain the other; so it is no less remarkable, that they who disclaim the one, disclaim also the other, and assert the liberty which nature, or (to speak more properly) the Author of nature, hath indulged to all mankind.

'Our Maker bids increase: who bids abstain
But our destroyer, foe to God and man?'—MILTON.

" The last note and character of these men is ' commanding to abstain from meats,' which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth, where in the original the word commanding is not expressed, but understood, with an ellipsis that commentators have observed to be sometimes used by the best classic authors. The same lying hypocrites, who should promote the worship of demons, should not only prohibit lawful marriage, but likewise impose unnecessary abstinence from meats; and these two, as indeed it is fit they should, usually go together, as constituent parts of the same hypocrisy. As we learn from Irenæus, the ancient heretics called Continents, who taught that matrimony was not to be contracted, reprobating the primitive work of God, and tacitly accusing him who made man and woman for the procreation of human kind, introduced also abstinence from animal food, showing themselves ungrateful to God who created all things. It is as much the law and constitution of all monks to abstain from meats as from marriage. Some never eat any flesh, others only of certain kinds, and on certain days. Frequent fasts are the rule, the boast of their order; and their carnal humility is their spiritual pride. *So lived the monks of the ancient church;* so live, with less strictness perhaps, but with greater ostentation, the monks and friars of the church of Rome: and these have been the principal propagators and defenders of the worship of the dead, both in former and in later times. The worship of the dead is indeed so monstrously absurd as well as impious, that there was hardly any possibility of its ever succeeding and prevailing in the world, but by hypocrisy and lies; but that these particular sorts of hypocrisy, celibacy under pretence of chastity and abstinence under pretence of devotion, should be employed for this purpose, the Spirit of God alone could foresee and foretell. There is no necessary connexion between the worship of the dead, and forbidding ' to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats:' and yet it is certain, that the great advocates of this worship have, by their pretended purity and mortification, procured the greater reverence to their persons, and the readier reception to their doctrines. But this idle, popish, monkish abstinence is as unworthy of a Christian, as it is unnatural to a man. It is perverting the purpose of nature, and 'commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving by the believers and them who know the truth.' "— *Dissertation XXIII.*

This candid and learned writer, while thus implicating the Fathers in the predicted apostasy, of which they were either the authors or the zealous promoters, would, no doubt, have resented the imputation of intending to condemn them, altogether; *as christian men;* or to deny their great merit in certain respects, as orators, as expounders of Scripture, or as pastors of the church. It is enough if we know them to have been under the influence of an infatuation which renders them the most dangerous of guides in theology. This well understood, we may then read them with abundant advantage.

Page 34.—No. V.

The author of the Life of Augustine, appended to the Venetian edition of his works, and who shows himself on all occasions jealous for the honour of the church, when he comes to speak of the irruption of the Vandals into the province of North Africa, is naturally led to refer to Salvian's report of the condition of the church in those provinces, at that time.* In substance he quotes Salvian, assenting generally to his statements; but with an exception which I here cite. The reader will observe that this writer has nothing to say but that he thinks things *must* have been somewhat better than we should suppose from Salvian's report, inasmuch as the labours of so many eminent bishops could not have been without effect.

Salvianus quam justus fuisset ille impulsus ex consuetis ac familiaribus Afrorum sceleribus demonstrat, maxime vero ex impudentia et blasphemiis, hoc est rebus iis quæ Dei religionisque honorem spectant ac justitiam divinam, eo clarius elucere ostendit in hac Vandalorum irruptione, quod hi fœdas spurcasque libidines ex ea provincia delevere. Is quidem hac in re multus est, tamque horribilem Africæ imaginem depingit ut difficulter hic modum tenuisse videatur. Enimvero cum isthic essent complures sanctissimi Episcopi, quis dubitet eorum curis ac laboribus in bene multis e populo Deum adspirasse? Atqui simul verissimum est quo pluribus ad salutem præsidiis instructa erat hæc provincia, eo fuisse eorum crimen immanius qui eisdem abusi vel in infidelitate paganorum, vel in schismate Donatistorum, vel in Manichæorum aliorumque popularium hæreticorum impiis dogmatibus, vel denique in vitiis et criminibus contumaces permanserunt. Ipsi quoque sancti Africani antistites agnoscunt non sine dolore perfectum esse hocce flagellum, tum ex improborum peccatis, tum etiam e timiditate bonorum qui, ne facultatum temporalium jacturam facerent, malis de quibus ingemiscebant obsistere verebantur.—*Vita*, p. 472, 473.

The substantial truth of Salvian's testimony we shall be able to attest by evidence drawn from several sources; and this evidence will apply to those portions of christendom with which he was not personally acquainted. But I have first to ask the reader's attention to our author's own words. It is proper to say that in addition to the passages of which a translation has been given in the fifth number, I subjoin a few not less pertinent, but which it did not seem necessary, or seemly, to give to the English reader. Those passages of course are not here repeated, of which the original has been already produced; nor does it seem needful to produce the context in all instances in which the

general import of a passage, perhaps of two or three pages, has been conveyed by abbreviation in a few lines.

PAGE 39.—No. V.

Quæritur itaque, cum hæc ita sint, si totum quod in hoc mundo est, cura et gubernaculo, et judicio Dei agitur, cur melior multo sit barbarorum conditio quam nostra. Cur inter nos quoque ipsos sors bonorum durior quam malorum. (p. 66.) Homo sum, non intelligo secreta Dei. Sufficiat tibi quod Deus a se agi ac dispensari cuncta testat. . . . Sicut enim plus est Deus, quam omnis humana ratio, sic plus mihi debet esse quam ratio, quod a Deo agi cuncta cognosco. (p. 67.)

Sed videamus tamen quid sit Deum fideliter credi. . . . Opinor fideliter hominem Christo credere, id est fidelem Deo esse, hoc est fideliter Dei mandata servare. . . . Sicut enim servi hominum . . . . sic profecto etiam christiani homines infideles sunt, si bona sibi a Deo assignata corruperint. Quæritur forsitan quæ sint bona quæ Deus christianis hominibus assignet: quæ? nisi omnia per quæ credimus, id est, per quæ omnia Christiani sumus. Primum scilicet legem, deinde prophetas, tertio evangelium, quarto apostolicas lectiones, postremum generationis novæ munus, sancti baptismatis gratiam, divini chrismatis unctionem. Videamus quis tanta hæc fidei sacramenta custodiat, ut fidelis esse videatur: quia infidelis, ut diximus, sit necesse est, qui fidei commissa non servat. Et quidem non quæro ut cuncta faciat quæ testamenta duorum temporum jubent; remitto omnes prophetarum minas, remitto etiam (quæ remitti omnino non possunt) vel apostolicorum librorum severissimam institutionem, vel evangelicorum voluminum plenam omni perfectionis genere doctrinam. Paucissimis saltem præceptis Dei quis obsequatur, interrogo. 'Diligite inimicos vestros,' &c. 'Quis odit fratrem suum homicida est.' 'Qui irascitur fratri suo sine causa, reus erit judicio.' 'Qui autem dixerit, fatue,' &c. Cum hæc omnia quæ jubentur a Deo, non modo a nobis omnino non fiant, sed pene in diversum omnia fiant, quando majora illa faciemus? 'Qui enim non renuntiaverit omnibus,' &c. 'Et qui se Christianum dicit, debet quemadmodum Christus ambulavit, sic et ipse ambulare.' (p. 70—75.) Sane etsi de cæteris, quas dixit, virtutibus Apostolicis nihil facimus, in hoc tamen uno, ubi Apostolus ter naufragasse se dicit, etiam vincere possumus. Non enim ter tantummodo naufragavimus, quorum pene omnis vita naufragium est. In tantum quippe vitiose ab omnibus vivitur, ut prope nullus Christianorum sit, qui non jugiter naufragare videatur. Sed dicit fortasse aliquis: non id esse nunc temporis, ut pro Christo nos perferamus, quæ tunc apostoli pertulerunt. Verum est; non namque sunt principes pagani, non tyranni persecutores. Dimittamus ergo illa quæ beatissimus Paulus pertulit. . . Videamus si in illis saltem religiosæ devotionis obsequiis, quæ minora atque communia in summa quiete et omni tempore Christiani obire possumus, præceptis Dominicis respondere tantamus.

Interrogo, qui sint, qui spoliantibus adversariis cedant: imo qui sint, qui adversarios suos non spoliare conentur. Tam procul enim abest, ut cum tunicis etiam alia relinquamus, ut si quo modo possumus, pallium simul adversariis tunicasque tollamus. Tam devote enim mandatis dominicis obedimus, ut non sufficiat nobis, quod adversariis nostris etiam minima vestimentorum nostrorum parte non cedimus, nisi eis quantum in nobis est, si res sinat, cuncta rapiamus. Jungitur autem præcepto huic par et consimile mandatum, quo ait Dominus: 'Qui percusserit te in dextram maxillam, præbe ei et alteram.' Quantos putamus esse, qui dicto huic vel aures modeste prebeant, vel certe etiamsi id facere videntur, animis acquiescant? Aut quotus quisque est, qui si ictum unum acceperit, non multos pro uno reddat. Tantum ab illo abest, ut cædenti maxillam præbeat, ut tum se vincere putet, non quando adversarium vapulando, sed quando cædendo superaverit. 'Quæ vultis,' inquit Salvator, 'ut faciant vobis homines, eadem et vos facite illis similiter.' Hujus sententiæ partem tam bene novimus, ut nunquam præteramus: partem sic prætermittimus, quasi penitus nesciamus. Nam quid ab aliis præstari nobis velimus, optime novimus: quid autem ipsi aliis debeamus præstare, nescimus. Atque utinam nesciremus. (p. 77—80.)

Tantum abest, ut aliorum commodis aliquid cum propria incommoditate præstemus, ut omnes vel maxime nostris commodis cum aliorumin commodo consulamus. Sed eligere forsitan majora quæque videmur, quæ nullus impleat, et, ut ipsi putant, implere omnino non possint, et præterire alia quæ et impleri queant, et ab omnibus impleantur. Sed primum illud considerandum est, quia nulli servorum licet, ex his quæ dominus suus imperat, eligere pro arbitrio quid velit facere, quid nolit. (p. 82.) Licet nobis non sufficiat, parva et minima quæque facere, acquiesco tamen ego minora dicere, ut ostendam maximam Christianorum omnium partem, ne exigua saltem ac minima fecisse. Jussit Salvator ut christiani homines non jurarent. Plures invenias qui sæpius pejerent, quam qui omnino non jurent. Jussit quoque ut nemo malediceret. Cujus non sermo maledictio est? (p. 84.)

Quæ ratio est, ut doleamus nos non audiri a Deo, cum ipsi Deum non audiamus? Porro autem nos omni studio, omni nisu, non solum jussa non facimus, sed contra id facimus quod jubemur. Jubet enim Deus, ut omnes nobis invicem cari simus; omnes autem nos mutua infestatione laceramus. Jubet Deus, ut cuncti egentibus sua tribuant: cuncti admodum aliena pervadunt. Jubet Deus, ut omnis qui Christianus est, etiam oculos castos habeat: quotusquisque est, qui non se luto fornicationis involvat? et quid plura? grave et luctuosum est, quod dicturus sum: ipsa Dei ecclesia quæ in omnibus esse debet placatrix Dei, quid est aliud quam exacerbatrix Dei? aut præter paucissimos quosdam, qui mala fugiunt, quid est aliud pene omnis cœtus Christianorum, quam sentina vitiorum? Quotum enim quemque invenies in ecclesia non aut ebriosum, aut helluonem, aut adulterum, aut fornicatorem, aut raptorem, aut ganeonem, aut latronem, aut homicidam? et quod his omnibus pejus est, prope hæc cuncta sine fine. Interrogo enim Christianorum omnium conscientiam: ex his vel flagitiis, vel sceleribus quæ nunc diximus, quotusquisque hominum non aliquid est horum? aut quotusquisque non totum? facilius quippe invenias qui totum sit, quam qui nihil. Et quod diximus, nihil, nimis forsitan gravis videatur esse censuræ: plus multo dicam: facilius invenias reos malorum omnium, quam non omnium: facilius majorum criminum, quam minorum: id est facilius qui et majora crimina cum minoribus, quam qui minora tantum sine majoribus perpetrarint. In hanc enim morum probrositatem prope omnis ecclesiastica plebs redacta est, ut in cuncto populo christiano genus quodammodo sanctitatis sit, minus esse vitiosum. Itaque ecclesias, vel potius templa atque altaria Dei minoris reverentiæ quidam habent, quam cujuslibet minimi ac municipalis judicis domum (p. 91, 92.) In templa autem, vel potius in altaria atque in sacraria Dei, passim omnes sordidi ac flagitiosi sine ulla penitus reverentia sacri honoris irrumpunt... Novum siquidem monstri genus est: eadem pene omnes jugiter faciunt, quæ fecisse se plangunt. Et qui intrant ecclesiasticum domum, ut mala antiqua defleant, exeunt: et quid dico, exeunt? in ipsis pene hoc orationibus suis ac supplicationibus moliuntur... Denique si vult quispiam scire quid in templo hujusmodi homines cogitaverint, videat quid sequatur. Siquidem consummatis solennibus sacris, statim ad consuetudinaria omnes studia discurrunt: alii scilicet ut furentur, alii ut inebrientur, alii ut fornicentur, alii ut latrocinentur. (p. 93, 94.)

Sed videlicet hæc mala, et omnem vitiorum probrositatem, quam supra dixi, ad servos fortasse quidam et ad abjectissimos quosque homines referendam putant: ceterum nomen ingenuum hac flagitiorum labe non pollui. Quid autem aliud est cunctorum negotiantium vita, quam fraus atque perjurium? Quid aliud curialium, quam iniquitas? Quid aliud officialium, quam calumnia? Quid aliud omnium militantium, quam rapina? Sed putas forsitan, quod hoc etiam de personis istiusmodi ferri possit. Hic est enim, inquis, eorum actus, quæ et professio, ac per hoc nihil mirum est, si agunt quod profitentur. Quasi vero aut agere ullum Deus res malas velit, aut profiteri, aut nulla sit penitus sacræ majestatis offensa, si maximum scelus minores videantur agere personæ: præsertim cum in hac hominum multitudine major multo sit pars generis humani: et absque dubio ubi major est peccantium turba, major est divinitatis injuria. Sed omnis, inquis, nobilitas ab his sceleribus immunis est. (p. 94.)

Sed aut iidem sunt nobiles, qui et divites: aut si sunt divites præter nobi-

les, et ipsi tamen quasi jam nobiles: quia tanta est miseria hujus temporis, ut nullus habeatur majus nobilis, quam qui est plurimum dives. Sed sive de alterutris, sive de utrisque apostolus dixerit, facile de hoc componi potest. Non enim interest de qua hoc potissimum parte dictum sit, quod utrique certum est convenire. Quis enim est vel nobilium omnino, vel divitum, horrens crimina? quamvis in hoc fefellerim: multi enim horrent, sed paucissimi evitant. In aliis quippe horrent, quod in se semper admittunt, mirum in modum et accusatores eorundem criminum et excusatores. Execrantur publice, quod occulte agunt: ac per hoc dum damnare se ceteros putant, ipsos se magis propria animadversione condemnant. Sed relinquamus istos, qui magis rei sunt. Quis est vel dives omnino, vel nobilis, aut innocentiam servans, aut a cunctis sceleribus manus abstinens? quamquam superflue a cunctis dixerim. Utinam vel a maximis, quia volunt sibi id forte majores quasi privilegium vindicare, ut jure suo crimina vel minora committant. Itaque de peccatis facilioribus nihil dico. Videamus si vel a duobus illis quasi capitalibus malis ullus immunis est, id est, vel ab homicidio, vel a stupro. Quis enim est aut humano sanguine non cruentes, aut cœnosa impuritate non sordidus? Unum quidem ex his ad pœnam æternam sufficit: sed prope nullus divitum non utrumque commisit. (p. 96, 97.)

Omnino enim nihil prodest nomen sanctum habere sine moribus: quia vita a professione discordans abrogat illustris tituli honorem per indignorum actum vilitatem. Unde cum pene nullam Christianorum omnium partem, pene nullum ecclesiarum omnium angulum non plenum omni offensione, et omni letalium peccatorum labe videamus, quid est in quo nobis de Christiano nomine blandiamur? Cum utique hoc ipso magis per nomen sacratissimum rei simus, qui a sancto nomine discrepamus. Nam et ideo plus sub religionis titulo Deum ludimus, quia positi in religione peccamus. (p. 99.)

Page 43.—No. V.

Tanto consensu omnes peccata sequimur quasi summi concilii conspiratione peccemus. (p. 102.) Tu credulitatem habes: non habes timorem: illi (demones) credulitatem habent pariter et timorem. (p. 105.) Excipiendi enim quidam sunt, sed paucissimi. . . . Ac primum servi si fures sunt, ad furandum forsitan egestate coguntur. . . . Mendaces quoque esse dicuntur. Ad mendacium atrocitate præsentis supplicii coartantur. Siquidem dum tormentis se volunt eximere, mentiuntur. . . . Tu vero nobilis, tu vero dives, qui omnibus bonis affluis . . . videamus si actus, non dico sanctos, sed vel innoxios habes. Et quis, ut superius dixi, divitum præter paucos non cunctis criminibus infectus est? Et quod paucos excipio, utinam plures atque omnes. . . . Quid ergo dives culpas in servo? hoc facis quod et ille. . . . Sed quid ego tam minute et quasi allegorice de hoc loquor: cum facinoribus apertissimis non furta tantum divitum, sed latrocinia comprobentur? Quotusquisque enim juxta divitem pauper aut intactus, aut tutus est? Siquidem pervasionibus præpotentum, aut sua homines imbecilli, aut etiam seipsos cum suis pariter amittunt. Quamvis tyrannidem hanc non pauperes tantum, sed pene universitas patiatur generis humani. . . . Ut pauci illustrentur, mundus evertitur; unius honor orbis excidium est. . . . Homicidia quoque in servis rara sunt, terrore ac metu mortis; in divitibus, assidua, spe ac fiducia impunitatis: nisi forte iniqui sumus, hoc quod divites faciunt, ad peccatum referendo: quia illi, cum occidunt servulos suos, jus putant esse, non crimen. Nec hoc solum, sed eodem privilegio etiam in exercendo impudicitiæ cœno abutuntur. Quotus enim quisque est divitum connubii sacramenta conservans? quem non libidinis furor rapiat in præceps? cui non, domus ac familia sua scortum sit: et qui non in quamcunque personam cupiditatis improbæ calor traxerit, mentis sequatur insaniâ? secundum illud scilicet quod de talibus dicit sermo divinus: 'Et qui insanientes in fœminas facti sunt.' Quid enim aliud, quam de se dictum hoc probat, qui totum pervadere vult concubitu, quicquid concupierit aspectu? Nam de concubinis quippiam dici, forsitan etiam injustum esse videatur: quia hoc in comparatione supradictorum flagitiorum quasi genus est castitatis, uxoribus paucis esse contentum, et intra certum conjugum numerum frenos libidinum continere. Conjugum dixi, quia ad tantam res impuden-

tiam venit, ut ancillas suas multi uxores putent: atque utinam sicut putantur esse quasi conjuges, ita solæ haberentur uxores! Illud magis tetrum ac detestabile, quod quidam matrimonia honorata sortiti, alias sibi rursum servilis status conjuges sumunt, deformantes sancti connubii honorem, per degeneris contubernii vilitatem; non erubescentes, maritos se fieri ancillarum suarum: præcipitantes fastigium nobilium matrimoniorum, in cubilia obscœna servarum: digni prorsus etiam illarum statu, quarum se putant dignos esse consortio. (p. 102—114.)

Diximus itaque, nobiles quosdam servis deteriores. . . . Numquid enim aliquis ex servis turbas concubinarum habet? numquid multarum uxorum labe polluitur: ut canum vel suum more tantas putet conjuges suas esse, quantas potuerit libidine subjugare? . . . . . Malos esse servos ac detestabiles satis certum est: sed hoc utique ingenui ac nobiles magis execrandi, si in statu honestiore pejores sunt. . . Nam illud latrocinium ac scelus quis digne eloqui possit, quod cum Romana respublica vel jam mortua, vel certe extremum spiritum agens, in ea parte qua adhuc vivere videtur, tributorum vinculis, quasi prædonum manibus strangulata moriatur: inveniuntur tamen plurimi divitum, quorum tributa pauperes ferunt. Hoc est, inveniuntur plurimi divitum, quorum tributa pauperes necant. Et quod inveniri dicimus plurimos, timeo ne verius diceremus, omnes: tam pauci enim mali hujus expertes sunt, (si tamen ulli sunt) ut in ea parte qua multos diximus, omnes pene divites reperire possimus. (p. 107—117.)

Page 44.—No. V.

Jam vero illud quale, quam sanctum, quod si quis ex nobilibus converti ad Deum cœperit, statim honorem nobilitatis amittit: aut quantus in christiano populo honor Christi est, ubi religio ignobilem facit? Statim enim ut quis melior esse tentaverit, deterioris abjectione calcatur: ac per hoc omnes quodammodo mali esse coguntur, ne viles habeantur. Et ideo non sine causa apostolus clamat: 'Seculum totum in malo positum est;' et verum est. Merito enim totum esse in malo dicitur, ubi boni locum habere non possunt. Siquidem ita totum iniquitatibus plenum est, ut aut mali sint qui sunt, aut qui boni sunt, multorum persecutione crucientur. Itaque sicut diximus, si honoratior quispiam religioni se applicuerit, illico honoratus esse desistit. Ubi enim quis mutaverit vestem, mutat protinus dignitatem. Si fuerit sublimis, fit despicabilis. Si fuerit splendidissimus, fit vilissimus. Si fuerit totus honoris, fit totus injuriæ. Et mirantur mundani quidam infideles, si offensam Dei aut iracundiam perferunt, ubi Deum in sanctis omnibus persequuntur? Perversa enim sunt, et in diversum cuncta mutata. Si bonus est quispiam, quasi malus spernitur. Si malus est, quasi bonus honoratur. Nihil itaque mirum est, si deteriora quotidie patimur, qui quotidie deteriores sumus. Et nova enim quotidie mala faciunt, et vetera non relinquunt. Surgunt recentia crimina, nec repudiantur antiqua. Quis ergo est causationis locus? quamlibet aspira et adversa patiamur, minora patimur quam meremur. Quid querimur, quod dure agat nobiscum Deus? multo nos cum Deo durius agimus. Exacerbamus quippe Deum impuritatibus nostris, et ad puniendos nos trahimus invitum. Cumque ejus naturæ sit mens Dei atque majestas, ut nulla iracundiæ passione moveatur, tanta tamen in nobis peccatorum exacerbatio est, ut per nos cogatur irasci. Vim, ut ita dixerim, facimus pietati suæ, ac manus quodammodo afferimus misericordiæ suæ. Cumque ejus benignitatis sit, ut velit nobis jugiter parcere, cogitur malis nostris scelera, quæ admittimus, vindicare. Ac sicuti illi solent, qui munitissimas urbes obsident, aut firmissimas arces urbium capere et subruere conantur, omnibus absque dubio eas et telorum et machinarum generibus oppugnant: ita nos ad expugnandam misericordiam Dei omni peccatorum immanium scelere, quasi omni telorum genere pugnamus: et injuriosum nobis Deum existimamus, cum ipsi injuriosissimi Deo simus. (p. 117—120.)

Si Sodomitas minus esse dicit damnabiles, quam cunctos evangelia negligentes, certissima ergo ratio est, qua et nos, qui in plurimis evangelia negligimus, pejus timere aliquando debeamus: præsertim cum usitatis jam et quasi facilioribus malis contenti esse nolimus. Non sufficiunt enim multis consuetudinarii reatus, non sufficiunt lites, non rapinæ, non calumniæ, non

sufficiunt vinolentiæ, non sufficiunt comessationes, non sufficiunt falsitates, non sufficiunt perjuria, non sufficiunt adulteria, non sufficiunt homicidia, non sufficiunt denique cuncta ista, etsi atrocitate inhumanissima, re tamen ipsa ad humanas injurias pertinentia, nisi blasphemia furiosarum mentium manus injiciant etiam in Deum. (p. 123.)

PAGE 46.—No. V.

Respiciamus enim ad turpitudines, ad flagella, ad scèlera illa Romanæ plebis, quæ supra diximus, et intelligemus, si protectionem mereri possumus, cum in tanta impuritate vivamus. Itaque, quia hoc argumento plurimi non respici res humanas a Deo dicunt, quod miseri, quod imbecilles sumus, quod meremur? Si enim in tantis vitiis, in tanta improbitate viventes, fortissimos, florentissimos, beatissimosque esse pateretur, suspicio fortasse aliqua esse poterat, quod non respiceret scelera Romanorum Deus, qui tam malos, tam perditos, beatos esse pateretur. Cum vero tam vitiosos, tam improbos, infimos et miserrimos esse jubeat, evidentissime patet, et aspici nos a Deo et judicari, quia hoc patimur quod meremur. Sed mereri nos absque dubio non putamus: et hinc est quod magis rei et criminosi sumus, quia non agnoscimus quod meremur. (p. 132.)

Sed scio, plurimis intolerabile videri, si barbaris deteriores esse dicamur. Et quid facimus, quod causæ nostræ hoc nihil proficit, si intolerabile id nobis esse videatur? Imo causam nostram hoc magis aggravat, si deteriores sumus, et meliores esse dicamus. 'Qui enim,' inquit apostolus, 'se existimat aliquid esse, cum nihil sit, se ipsum seducit. Opus autem suum probet homo.' Operi ergo nostro debemus credere, non opinioni: rationi, non libidini: veritati, non voluntati. Igitur quia non ferendum quidam existimant, ut deteriores aut non multo etiam meliores barbaris judicemur, videamus, aut quomodo simus, aut quibus barbaris. Duo enim genera in omni gente omnium barbarorum sunt, id est, aut hæreticorum, aut paganorum. His ergo omnibus, quantum ad legem divinam pertinet, dico, nos sine comparatione meliores: quantum autem ad vitam, ac actus, dolco ac plango esse pejores, quamvis id ipsum tamen, ut ante jam diximus, non de omni penitus Romani populi universitate dicamus. Excipio enim primum omnes religiosos: deinde nonnullos etiam seculares religiosis pares: aut si id nimis grande est, aliqua tamen religiosis honestorum actuum probitate consimiles. Ceteros vero aut omnes, aut pene omnes, magis reos esse quam barbaros. Hoc est autem deteriorem esse, magis reum esse. Itaque quia nonnulli irrationabile atque absurdum arbitrantur, ut aut deteriores, aut non multum etiam meliores barbaris judicemur: videamus, ut dixi, aut quomodo, aut quibus barbaris. Ego enim præter eos tantummodo Romanorum, quos paulo ante nominavi, ceteros aut omnes aut pene omnes majoris reatus dico, et criminosioris vitæ esse quam barbaros. Irasceris forsitan qui hæc legis, et condemnas insuper quæ legis. Non refugio censuram tuam: condemna, si mentior: condemna, si non probavero: condemna, si id quod assero, non etiam scripturas sacras dixisse monstravero. Igitur qui meliores nos multo, cunctis quæ sunt in mundo gentibus judicamus? nec ipse, qui Romanos dico in plurimis deteriores, abnego in quibusdam esse meliores. Vita enim, ut dixi, et peccatis sumus deteriores: lege autem catholica sine comparatione meliores. (p. 134—137.)

PAGE 50.—No. V.

Remota ergo legis prærogativa, quæ nos aut nihil omnino adjuvat, aut etiam justa animadversione condemnat, vitam barbarorum atque nostrorum studia, mores, vitia comparemus. Injusti sunt barbari, et nos hoc sumus: avari sunt barbari, et nos hoc sumus: infideles sunt barbari, et nos hoc sumus: cupidi sunt barbari, et nos hoc sumus: impudici sunt barbari, et nos hoc sumus. Omnium denique improbitatum atque impuritatum pleni sunt barbari, et nos hoc sumus. Sed responderi fortasse possit: Ergo si pares vitiositate barbaris sumus, cur non sumus etiam viribus pares? . . . Noster ergo hic peculiariter reatus est, qui legem divinam legimus, et legalia semper scripta volumus, qui Deum nosse nos dicimus, et jussa illius ac præcepta calcamus: ac per hoc, cum eum spernamus, quem coli a nobis credimus atque jactamus, id ipsum quod cultus Dei videtur, injuria est. Denique ut de peccatis aliis nihil dicam, quis est omnino hominum

secularium præter paucos, qui non ad hoc semper Christi nomen in ore habeat, ut pejeret? Unde etiam pervulgatum hoc fere et apud nobiles, et apud ignobiles sacramentum est, 'per Christum.' 'Per Christum, quia hoc facio:' 'per Christum, quia hoc ago:' 'per Christum, quia nihil aliud dicturus sum.' Et quid plura? In id penitus deducta res est, ut sicut de paganis barbaris prius diximus, Christi nomen non videatur jam sacramentum esse, sed sermo. Nam in tantum apud plurimos nomen hoc parvi penditur, ut nunquam minus cogitent quippiam facere, quam cum se jurant per Christum esse facturos. Et cum scriptum sit, 'Non nominabis nomen Domini Dei tui in vanum:' in id reverentia Christi decidit, ut inter ceteras seculi vanitates nihil jam pene vanius, quam Christi nomen esse videatur. Denique multi non otiosas tantummodo res et aniles, sed etiam scelera quædam se jurant per Christi nomen esse facturos. Hic enim loquendi usus est talibus: 'Per Christum, quia tollo illud:' 'Per Christum, quia cædo illum:' 'Per Christum, quia occido illum:' ad hoc res cecidit, ut cum per Christi nomen juraverint, putent se scelera etiam religiose esse facturos. Denique quid mihi ipsi evenerit, dicam. Cum ante aliquantulum tempus victus cujusdam pauperis prece, præpotentiori cuidam supplicarem obsecrans, ne homini misero et egestuoso rem ac substantiam suam tolleret; ne subsidium, et stipem, quo paupertas illius nitebatur, auferret: tum ille, qui ejus rebus siti rabida inhiaverat, ac prædam jam spe et cupiditate ardentissima devoraverat, respiciens ac vibrans in os meum truces oculos, utpote qui tolli sibi a me putaret, quod ipse alteri non tulisset, nequaquam hoc quod peterem, facere se posse respondit: quasi vero jussu aut scripto id sacro faceret, quod penitus præterire non posset. Cumque ego causam, quo non fieri hoc valeret, quærerem, dixit rem violentissimam, et cui contradici penitus non deberet: Juravi, inquit, res illius a me esse tollendas, vide ergo an possim vel non debeam efficere, quod etiam interposito Christi nomine me juravi esse facturum. Tum ego, (quid enim amplius facerem? cum res tam justa obtendebatur et sancta,) audita religiosissimi sceleris ratione discessi. Hic nunc interrogo omnes qui sanæ mentis sunt: Quis unquam crederet usque in hanc contumeliam Dei progressuram esse humanæ cupiditatis audaciam, ut id ipsum in quo Christo injuriam faciunt, dicant se ob Christi nomen esse facturos? O inæstimabile facinus et prodigiosum! Quid non ausæ sint improbæ mentes? armant se ad latrocinandum per Christi nomen: auctorem quodammodo sui sceleris Deum faciunt: et cum interdictor ac vindex malorum omnium Christus sit, dicunt se scelus quod agunt, agere pro Christo. (p. 142—145.) Et cum scriptum sit nobis, ut 'omnia faciamus in gloriam Dei,' nos e diverso cuncta in Dei facimus injuriam. Cumque ipse Salvator noster ad nos quotidie clamet: 'Sic luceat lux vestra coram hominibus, ut videant filii hominum opera vestra bona, et magnificent Patrem vestrum qui in cœlis est:' nos ita vivimus e contrario, ut filii hominum videant opera nostra mala, et blasphement Patrem nostrum qui est in cœlis. (p. 147, 148.)

Numquid hæc de ulla istarum gentium [de Hunnis scil. . . . Saxonibus aut Francis . . . Mauris . . . Scythis aut Gepidis] dici queunt? Non utique. De nobis quippe omnia ista dicuntur. In nobis Christus patitur opprobrium: in nobis patitur lex christiana maledictum. De nobis namque dicitur illud quod supra diximus: Ecce quales sunt, qui Christum colunt: falsum plane illud est quod aiunt, se bona discere; quod jactant, se sanctæ legis præcepta retinere. Si enim bona discerent, boni essent. Talis profecto secta est, quales et sectatores: hoc sunt absque dubio quod docentur. Apparet itaque, et prophetas, quos habent, impuritatem docere, et apostolos, quos legunt, nefaria sensisse, et evangelia, quibus imbuuntur, hæc quæ ipsi faciunt prædicare. Postremo sancta a Christianis fierent, si Christus sancta docuisset. Æstimari itaque de cultoribus suis potest ille qui colitur. Quomodo enim bonus magister est, cujus tam malos videmus esse discipulos? Ex ipso enim Christiani sunt, ipsum audiunt, ipsum legunt. Promptum est omnibus Christi intelligere doctrinam. Vide Christianos, quid agant, et evidenter potest de ipso Christo sciri, quid doceat. (p. 149, 150.)

Eis [hæreticis scil: barbaris] traditio magistrorum suorum et doctrina inveterata, quasi lex est, qui hoc sciunt, quod docentur. Hæretici ergo sunt, sed non scientes. . . . Qualiter pro hoc ipso falsæ opinionis errore in die judicii

puniendi sint, nullus potest scire nisi judex. Interim idcirco eis, ut reor, patientiam Deus commodat, quia videt eos, etsi non recte credere, affectu tamen piæ opinionis errare. (p. 162, 163.)

Porro autem quantum ad conversationem Gothorum aut Vandalorum pertinet: quid est in quo eis aut præponere nos, aut etiam comparare possimus? Ac primum ut de affectu et caritate dicam... Omnes se fere barbari, qui modo sunt unius gentis et regis, mutuo amant. Omnes pene Romani se mutuo persequuntur. Quis enim civis non invidet civi?... Omnes quippe a se, etsi loco non absunt, affectu absunt: etsi habitatione junguntur, mente disjuncti sunt. Atque utinam hoc, (licet sit pessimum malum) utinam cives tantum atque vicini! illud est gravius, quod nec propinqui quidem propinquitatis jura conservant. Quis enim se proximis suis proximum reddit?... In quo non luridus malevolentiæ zelus ardet? Cujus non sensum livor invasit? Cui non prosperitas aliena supplicium est? Quis non bonum alterius, malum suum credit? Cui ita sufficit felicitas sua, et etiam alium velit esse felicem? Novum et inæstimabile nunc in plurimis malum est. Parum alicui est, si ipse sit felix, nisi alter fuerit infelix. Jam vero illud quale, quam sævum, quam ex hac ipsa impietate descendens, quam alienum a barbaris, quam familiare Romanis, quod se invicem exactione proscribunt! Immo non invicem (nam hoc tolerabilius ferme esset, si pateretur quisque quod fecerat:) sed illud gravius est, quod plurimi proscribuntur a paucis, quibus exactio publica peculiaris est præda, qui fiscalis debiti titulos faciunt quæstus esse privatos: et hoc non summi tantum, sed pene infimi, non judices solum, sed etiam judicibus obsequentes. (p. 165—167.)

PAGE 52.—NO. V.

Nam et latrones ferme omnes gaudent et gloriantur, si atrociores admodum, quam sunt, esse dicantur. Quis ergo, ut dixi, locus est, ubi non a principalibus civitatum, viduarum et pupillorum viscera devorentur, et cum his ferme omnium sanctorum? Nam et hos quasi viduas et pupillos habent, quia tueri se aut pro studio professionis suæ nolunt, aut pro innocentia atque humilitate non possunt. Nemo itaque horum tutus est, nec ulli admodum, præter summos, a vastatione latrocinii populantis immunes, nisi qui ipsis latronibus par est in hac conditione. Immo in hoc scelus res devoluta est, ut nisi quis malus fuerit, salvus esse non possit. Sed videlicet cum tot sint qui bonos vastant, sunt fortasse aliqui, qui in hac vastatione succurrant, qui, ut scriptum est, 'eripiant egenum et pauperem de manu peccatoris. Non est qui faciat bonum, non est pene usque ad unum.' Ideo dixi 'pene usque ad unum,' quia tanta est raritas bonorum, ut pene unus esse videatur. Quis enim vexatis atque laborantibus opem tribuat, cum improborum hominum violentiæ etiam sacerdotes Domini non resistant? Nam aut tacent plurimi eorum, aut similes sunt tacentibus etiamsi loquantur, et hoc multi non inconstantia, sed consilio, ut putant, atque ratione. (p. 167—169.)

Inter hæc vastantur pauperes, viduæ gemunt, orphani proculcantur, in tantum, ut multi eorum, et non obscuris natalibus editi, et liberaliter instituti, ad hostes fugiant, ne persecutionis publicæ afflictione moriantur: quærentes scilicet apud Barbaros Romanam humanitatem, quia apud Romanos barbaram inhumanitatem ferre non possunt. ... Itaque passim vel ad Gothos, vel ad Bagaudas, vel ad alios ubique dominantes barbaros migrant, et commigrasse non pœnitet. Malunt enim sub specie captivitatis vivere liberi, quam sub specie libertatis esse captivi. Itaque nomen civium Romanorum, aliquando non solum magno æstimatum, sed magno emptum, nunc ultro repudiatur ac fugiatur: nec vile tantum sed etiam abominabile pene habetur. . . . (p. 169, 170.) Sed quid possunt miseri qui assiduum, immo continuum exactionis publicæ patiuntur excidium, quibus imminet semper gravis et indefessa proscriptio, qui domos suas deserunt, ne in ipsis domibus torqueantur; exilia petunt, ne supplicia sustineant. (p. 173.) Ubi, aut in quibus sunt nisi in Romanis tantum hæc mala? Quorum injustitia tanta, nisi nostra?... Tam longe enim est, ut hæc inter Gothos barbari tolerent, ut ne Romani quidem, qui inter eos vivunt, ista patiantur. Itaque unum illic Romanorum omnium votum est, ne unquam eos necesse sit in jus transire Romanum. Et miramur, si non vincantur a nostris partibus Gothi, cum malint

apud eos esse quam apud nos Romani? (p. 178). Miramur si nos barbari capiunt, cum fratres nostros nos faciamus esse captivos? Nil ergo mirum esse tot vastationes atque excidia civitatum; diu id plurimorum oppressione elaboravimus, et captivando alios etiam ipsi inciperemus esse captivi. Sentimus enim, etsi tardius multo quam merebamur, sentimus tamen illa quæ fecimus, et juxta sermonem sacrum, 'labores manuum nostrum manducamus,' ac justo judice Deo solvimus quæ debemus. (p. 182.) Vim Deo facimus iniquitatibus nostris; ipsi in nos iram divinitatis armamus. Cogimus ad ulciscendas criminum nostrorum immanitates nolentem Deum. Prope est, ut eum non permittamus ut parcat. Nam cum in eum nullum unquam injustitiæ signum cadere aut apparere possit, sic agimus, ut si enormitates nostrorum scelerum non ulciscitur, injustus esse videatur. (p. 184.)

PAGE 53.—No. V.

Vere propheticum illud de his rectissime dici possit: 'Comparati sunt jumentis insipientibus, et similes sunt illis.' (Ps. xlviii.) Atque utinam jumentis. Melius quippe fuerat, belluina imprudentia deviasse. Illud pejus et criminosius, quia non ignorantia Dei, sed despectione peccarunt. Atque hoc videlicet laici tantummodo, non quidam etiam clericorum, seculares, non multi etiam religiosi. Imo sub specie religionis vitiis secularibus mancipati: qui scilicet post veterum flagitiorum probrosa crimina titulo sanctitatis sibimet inscripto, non conversatione alii, sed professione, nomen tantum demutavere, non vitam: et summam divini cultus habitum magis quam actum existimantes, vestem tantummodo exuere, non mentem. Unde illi se minore invidia criminosos putant, qui cum pœnitentiam quasi egisse dicant, sicut mores pristinos, ita etiam habitum non relinquunt. Nam taliter ferme omnia agunt, ut eos non tam putes antea pœnitentiam criminum egisse, quam postea ipsius pœnitentiæ pœnitere: nec tam prius pœnituisse, quod male vixerint, quam postea quod se promiserint bene victuros. Sciunt me verum loqui, et testimonium mihi etiam conscientia sua dicunt, cum multi alii, tum præcipue illi novorum honorum religiosi ambitores, et post acceptum pœnitentiæ nomen, amplissimæ, ac prius non habitæ potestatis emptores: adeo non seculares tantum, sed plus etiam quam seculares esse voluerunt, ut non sufficeret eis quod ante fuerant, nisi plus essent quam fuissent.

Quomodo igitur tales istos pœnitentiam se egisse non pœnitet? sicut etiam illos de conversione ac Deo aliquid cogitasse, qui a conjugibus propriis abstinentes, a rerum alienarum pervasione se non abstinuerunt: et cum profiteantur continentiam corporum, in incontinentia debacchantur animorum. Novum prorsus est conversionis genus: licita non faciunt; illicita committunt. Temperant a concubitu, et non temperant a rapina. Quid agis, stulta persuasio? peccata interdixit Deus, non matrimonia: non conveniunt vestris studiis facta vestra; non debetis esse amici criminum, qui dicitis vos effectores esse virtutum. Præposterum est quod agitis: non est conversio, sed aversio: qui jam pridem (ut fama est) opus etiam honesti matrimonii reliquistis, tandem a scelere cessate. Et quidem justum est, ut ab omni scelere: sed tamen si non ab omni, (quia hoc fortasse durum et impossibile esse creditis,) certe vel maximo et prodigioso. Esto: juxta te, quicunque ille es, boni manere non valeant. Esto: pauperes habitare non possint. Esto: sis persecutor multorum inopum, vastatorque miserorum. Esto: sis afflictor omnium, dummodo extraneorum. Tandem quæso vel tuis parce: et si non omnibus tuis, (quia etiam hoc forsitan onerosum tibi et grave judicas, si omnibus tuis parcas) parce saltem vel illis tuis, qui te non affinibus tantum, aut aliis propinquis, sed personis etiam clementissimis et pignoribus charissimis prætulerunt. (p. 185—188.)

PAGE 55.—No. V.

Neque enim necesse est, ut unum obesse omnibus putem, cum omnes mutuo sibi obsint. Non convenit, ut per unum cunctos periclitari putem, cum per se cuncti periclitentur. Omnes enim admodum in perditionem ruunt, aut certe, ut aliud dicam levius, pene omnes. Unde enim hoc bonum populo christiano, ut aut certe minor, aut certe vel idem esset malorum

numerus qui bonorum? O miseriam lachrymabilem! o miseriam luctuosam! quam dissimilis est nunc a seipso populus christianus, id est ab eo qui quondam fuit. Tunc princeps apostolorum Petrus Ananiam et Sapphiram, quia mentiti essent, morte mulctavit. Beatissimus quoque Paulus etiam de ecclesia malum expulit, ne contactu suo plurimos inquinaret. Nunc nos etiam pari utriusque partis numero contenti sumus. Et quid contenti dicam? Exultare nos potius ac tripudiare gaudio conveniret, si parilitas nobis ista contingeret. Ecce in quid recidimus: ecce in quid, post illam christiani populi puritatem, qua omnes quondam immaculati erant, ecce in quid redacti sumus, ut beatam fore ecclesiam judicemus, si vel tantum in se boni habeat quantum mali. Nam quomodo beatam non arbitremur, si mediam plebis partem haberet innoxiam, quam pene totam nunc esse plangimus criminosam? Unde superflue dudum de uno malo locuti sumus, superflue unius scelera deflevimus; aut omnes enim, aut omnes pene flendi atque lugendi sunt. Nam aut plurimi tales sunt, aut certe (quod non minus criminosum est) cupiunt tales esse, et laborant actu malorum operum non impares videri; ac per hoc etiamsi minora mala faciunt, quia minus possunt, non minus tamen mali sunt, quia nollent minus esse si possent. Denique quod unum possunt, vel voto tales sunt, ac voluntate non cedunt; et in quantum facultas suppetit, superare contendunt. Est enim, licet in dissimillimis rebus, hæc illorum æmulatio quæ bonorum, ut sicut boni optant cunctos honestate mentium vincere, sic mali cupiant pravitate superare. Nam sicut hæc bonorum gloria est, ut quotidie meliores sint, sic malorum omnium, ut deteriores: et sicut optimi cupiunt virtutum universarum culmen ascendere, sic pessimi optant palmas sibi universorum scelerum vindicare: et hoc utique in malum nostrum, maxime nostri, hoc est christiani, qui scilicet, ut jam diximus, malitiam sapientiam putant: et de quibus Deus specialiter dixit: 'Perdam sapientiam sapientum, et intellectum prudentium reprobabo.' Cumque apostolus clamet: 'Si quis videtur sapiens, stultus fiat, ut sit sapiens:' hoc est dicere, Si quis vult esse sapiens, sit bonus: quia nemo vere sapiens est, nisi vere bonus. Nos e diverso malarum mentium vitio, et, ut divinitas ait, reprobo sensu, bonitatem pro stultitia repudiantes, et nequitiam pro sapientia diligentes, tanto quotidie prudentiores esse nos credimus, quanto pejores sumus. Et quæ tandem, rogo, spes emendationis in nobis est, qui non errore opinionis ad malum ducimur, sed studio malæ voluntatis admittimur, ut semper pejores esse videamur? Et hinc est, quod dudum questus sum, deteriores nos multo esse, quam barbaros: quia illos ignorantia legis excusat, nos scientia accusat. Illi per imperitiam veritatis, quia quæ sunt bona nesciunt, mala pro bonis diligunt: nos cum scientiam veritatis habeamus, quæ sint bona optima novimus modis. Primum, quod nihil ferme vel criminum, vel flagitiorum est, quod in spectaculis non sit: ubi summum deliciarum genus est mori homines, aut quod est morte gravius acerbiusque, lacerari, expleri ferarum alvos humanis carnibus, comedi homines, cum circumstantium lætitia, conspicientium voluptate: hoc est non minus pene hominum aspectibus, quam bestiarum dentibus devorari. Atque ut hoc fiat, orbis impendium est. Magna enim cura id agitur, et elaboratur: adeuntur etiam loca abdita, lustrantur invii saltus, peragrantur sylvæ inexplicabiles, conscenduntur nubiferæ alpes, penetrantur niviferæ valles: et ut devorari possint a feris viscera hominum, non licet naturam rerum aliquid habere secretum.

Sed hæc, inquis, non semper fiunt. Certum est, et præclara erroris est excusatio, quia non semper fiunt, quasi vero unquam fieri debeant, quæ Deum lædant: aut ideo quæ mala sunt, bene fiant, quia non jugiter fiant. Nam et homicidæ homines non semper occidunt, et homicidæ tamen sunt, etiam quando non occidunt, quia interdum polluuntur homicidio: et latrones omnes non semper latrocinantur, sed latrones tamen non esse desinunt: quia etiam cum rebus ipsis latrocinia non agunt, animis tamen a latrocinio non recedunt. Sic utique omnes hi, qui spectaculis istiusmodi delectantur, etiam quando non spectant, innoxii tamen a spectaculorum maculis mente non sunt, quia semper vellent spectare, si possent. Nec solum hoc, sed sunt alia majora. Quid enim? nunquid non consulibus et pulli adhuc, gentilium sacrilegiorum more, pascuntur, et volantis pennæ auguria quæruntur, ac

pene omnia fiunt, quæ etiam illi quondam pagani veteres frivola atque irridenda duxerunt? (p. 192—197.)

PAGE 56.—No. V.

Sed de his putemus hoc satis esse quod dictum est, quæ, ut ipsi excusatis, non semper fiunt. De quotidianis tamen obscœnitatibus loquamur, quas tales ac tam innumeras legiones dæmonum excogitaverunt, ut etiam honestæ ac probæ mentes, etsi nonnullas earum spernere ac calcare possunt, omnes tamen penitus superare vix possint. Sicut enim exercitus pugnaturi ea loca, per quæ venturas hostium turmas sciunt, aut foveis intercidere, aut sudibus præfigere, aut tribulis infestare dicuntur: scilicet ut etiamsi non in omnia ea quispiam incidat, nullus tamen penitus evadat: ita etiam dæmones tam multas in vita ista humano generi illecebrarum insidias prætenderunt, ut etsi plurimas earum aliquis effugiat, tamen quacunque capiatur. Equidem quia longum est nunc dicere de omnibus, (amphitheatris scilicet, odeis, lusoriis, pompis, athletis, petaminariis, pantomimis, cæterisque portentis: quæ piget dicere, quia piget malum tale vel nosse,) de solis circorum ac theatrorum impuritatibus dico. Tali enim sunt, quæ illic fiunt, ut ea non solum dicere, sed etiam recordari aliquis sine pollutione non possit: alia quippe crimina singulas sibi ferme in nobis vindicant portiones, ut cogitationes sordidæ animum, ut impudici aspectus oculos, ut auditus improbi aures: ita ut cum ex his unum aliquid erraverit, reliqua possint carere peccatis: in theatris vero nihil horum reatu vacat, quia et concupiscentiis animus, et auditu aures, et aspectu oculi polluuntur. Quæ quidem omnia tam flagitiosa sunt, ut etiam explicare ea quispiam atque eloqui salvo pudore non valeat. Quis enim integro verecundiæ statu dicere queat illas rerum turpium imitationes, illas vocum ac verborum obscœnitates, illas motuum turpitudines, illas gestuum fœditates? quæ quanti sint criminis, vel hinc intelligi potest, quod et relationem sui interdicunt. Nonnulla quippe etiam maxima scelera incolumi honestate referentis et nominari, et argui possunt, ut homicidium, latrocinium, adulterium, sacrilegium, ceteraque in hunc modum. Solæ theatrorum impuritates sunt, quæ honeste non possunt vel accusari. Ita nova in coarguenda harum turpitudinum probrositate res evenit arguenti: ut cum absque dubio honestus sit qui accusare ea velit, honestate tamen integra ea loqui et accusare non possit. Alia quoque omnia mala agentes polluunt, non videntes vel audientes. Siquidem esti blasphemum quempiam audias, sacrilegio non pollueris, quia mente dissentis: etsi intervenias latrocinio, non inquinaris actu, quia abhorres animo. Solæ spectaculorum impuritates sunt, quæ unum admodum faciunt et agentium et aspicientium crimen. Nam dum spectantes hæc comprobant ac libenter vident, omnes ea visu atque assensu agunt, ut vere in eos apostolicum illud peculiariter cadat: 'quia digni sunt morte non solum qui faciunt ea, sed etiam qui consentiunt facientibus.' Itaque in illis imaginibus fornicationum, omnis omnino plebs animo fornicatur. Et qui forte ad spectaculum puri venerant, de theatro adulteri revertuntur. Non enim tunc tantummodo quando redeunt, sed etiam quando veniunt, fornicantur. Nam hoc ipso quod aliquiis rem obscœnam cupit, dum ad immunda properat, immundus est.

Quæ cum ita sint, ecce qualia aut omnes, aut pene omnes Romani agunt. Et cum hæc ita sint, qui talia agimus, negligi nos a divinitate causamur, relinqui nos a Domino nostro dicimus, cum ipsi Dominum relinquamus. Fingamus enim, quod respicere nos Dominus noster velit, etiam non merentes: videamus si potest. Ecce innumera Christianorum millia in spectaculis quotidie rerum turpium commemorantur. Potest ergo illos Deus respicere, qui tales sunt? Potest ad eos respicere, qui bacchantur in circis, qui mœchantur in theatris? An forte hoc volumus, et hoc dignum putamus, ut cum in circis nos et in theatris Deus videat, ea quæ nos aspicimus, aspiciat quoque ipse nobiscum, et turpitudines quas nos cernimus, cernat etiam ipse nobiscum? Alterutrum enim fieri necesse est: quia si nos videre dignatur, consequens est, ut etiam illa, ubi nos sumus, videat: aut si ab illis (quod non dubium est) avertit oculos, etiam a nobis, qui illic sumus, pariter avertat. Et cum hæc ita sint, facimus hæc tamen, ac sine cessatione, quæ dixi. An forte in morem veterum paganorum, theatrorum et

circorum nos Deum habere arbitramur? Faciebant enim hæc illi quondam quia has idolorum suorum delicias esse credebant. Nos quomodo hæc facimus, qui odisse Deum nostrum hæc certi sumus? Aut certe si placere has turpitudines Deo novimus, non prohibeo, quin sine cessatione faciamus. Si vero in conscientia nostra hoc est, quod Deus horret, quod execratur, quod sicut in his sit pastus diaboli, ita offensio Dei, quomodo nos in ecclesia Dei colere Deum dicimus, qui in obscœnitate ludorum semper diabolo deservimus, et hæc gnari ac scientes, de consilio et industria? Et quæ nobis, quæso, spes erit apud Deum, qui non casu aut imprudentia Deum lædimus, sed exemplo illorum quondam gigantum, quos insanis conatibus superna tentasse, et quasi in nubes gradum tulisse legimus: sic nos per injurias, quas in omni mundo semper inferimus, quasi consensu publico cœlum oppugnamus. Christo ergo, (ὁ amentia monstruosa!) Christo circenses offerimus et mimos, tunc et hoc maxime cum ab eo aliquid boni capimus, cum prosperitatis ab eo aliquid attribuitur, aut victoria de hostibus a divinitate præstatur. Et quid aliud hac re facere videmur, quam si quis homini beneficium largienti injuriosus sit, aut blandientem conviciis cædat, aut osculantis vultum mucrone transfigat? Interrogo enim omnes potentes ac divites mundi hujus, cujus piaculi reus sit servus ille, qui bono ac pio domino malum cogitet, qui bene merenti convicium faciat, et pro libertate quam accipit, contumeliam reddat: absque dubio maximi criminis reus creditur, qui malum pro bono reddit, cui etiam malum pro malo reddere non liceret. Hoc ergo etiam nos, qui Christiani dicimur, facimus: irritamus in nos misericordem Deum impuritatibus nostris, propitiantem sordibus lædimus, blandientem injuriis verberamus. Christo ergo, (ὁ amentia monstruosa!) Christo circenses offerimus et mimos: Christo pro beneficiis suis theatrorum obscœna reddimus: Christo ludicrorum turpissimorum hostias immolamus. (p. 198—204.)

PAGE 57.—No. V.

'Venit Dominus Jesus Christus ut mundaret sibi populum acceptabilem, sectatorem bonorum operum.' Ubi est populus ille mundus? ubi populus acceptabilis? . . . 'Christus,' inquit scriptura, 'pro nobis passus est, nobis exemplum relinquens, ut sequamur vestigia ejus.' Videlicet vestigia Salvatoris sequimur in circis, vestigia Salvatoris sequimur in theatris. . . . . Nobis ridere et gaudere non sufficit, nisi cum peccato atque insania gaudeamus: nisi risus noster impuritatibus, nisi flagitiis misceatur. Quæ vecordia est et amentia, ut non putemus risum et gaudium tanti esse, nisi in se Dei habeat injuriam! Injuriam utique, et quidem maximam. In spectaculis enim quædam apostasia fidei est, et a symbolis ipsius et cœlestibus sacramentis letalis prævaricatio. Quæ est enim in baptismo salutari Christianorum prima confessio? quæ scilicet, nisi ut renuntiare se diabolo ac pompis ejus atque spectaculis et operibus protestentur? (p. 206, 207.)

Quid simile apud barbaros? ubi apud illos circenses? ubi theatra? ubi scelus diversarum impuritatum? . . . quibus illi etsi, utpote pagani, uterentur, minore tamen culpa sacræ offensionis errabant. . . . Ac per hoc ubi est Christianitas nostra, qui ad hoc tantummodo sacramentum salutis accipimus, ut majore postea prævaricationis scelere peccemus? Nos ecclesiis Dei ludicra anteponimus, nos altaria spernimus, et theatra honoramus. Omnia denique amamus, omnia colimus: solus nobis in comparatione omnium Deus vilis est. Denique præter alia quæ id probant, indicat hoc etiam hæc res ipsa quam dico. Si quando enim venerit, (quod scilicet sæpe evenit) ut eodem die et festivitas ecclesiastica, et ludi publici agantur, quæro ab omnium conscientia, quis locus majores christianorum virorum copias habeat, caveane ludi publici, an atrium Dei? et templum omnes magis sectentur, an theatrum? dicta evangeliorum magis diligant, an thymelicorum: verba vitæ, an verba mortis: verba Christi, an verba mimi? Non est dubium, quin illud magis amemus, quod anteponimus. Omni enim feralium ludicrorum die, si quælibet ecclesiæ festa fuerint, non solum ad ecclesiam non veniunt, qui Christianos se esse dicunt: sed si qui inscii forte venerint, dum in ipsa ecclesia sunt, si ludos agi audiunt, ecclesiam derelinquunt. Spernimus Dei templum, ut concurratur ad theatrum: ecclesia vacuatur, circus imple-

tur: Christum in altario dimittimus, ut adulterantes visu impurissimo oculos ludicrorum turpium fornicatione pascamus postea. (p. 209—211.)

Sed videlicet responderi hoc potest, non in omnibus hæc Romanorum urbibus agi. Verum est: etiam plus ego addo, ne illic quidem nunc agi, ubi semper acta sunt antea. Non enim hoc agitur jam in Magontiacensium atque Massiliensium civitate, sed quia excisa et deleta est. Non agitur Agrippinæ, sed quia hostibus plena. Non agitur Treverorum urbe excellentissima, sed quia quadruplici est eversione prostrata. Non agitur denique in plurimis Galliarum urbibus et Hispaniarum; et ideo væ nobis atque impuritatibus nostris! Quæ spes christianis plebibus ante Deum est? Quandoquidem ex illo in urbibus Romanis hæc mala non sunt, ex quo in barbarorum jure esse cœperunt. Ac per hoc vitiositas et impuritas quasi germanitas quædam est Romanorum hominum, et quasi mens atque natura: quia ibi præcipue vitia ubicunque Romani..... Impura omnia prius acta sunt; nunc autem ludicra ipsa ideo non aguntur, quia agi jam præ miseria temporis atque egestate non possunt. Et ideo quod prius actum est, vitiositatis fuit: quod nunc non agitur, necessitatis..... Nam quantum ad votum nostræ libidinis atque impurissimæ voluptatis, optaremus profecto vel ad hoc tantummodo plus habere, ut possemus in hoc turpitudinis lutum plura convertere..... Non est ergo quod blandiri nobis aliquid in hac parte possimus, ut dicamus, non in omnibus nunc urbibus agi illa quæ prius acta sunt. Ideo enim non in omnibus jam aguntur, quia urbes, ubi agebantur illa, jam non sunt; et ubi, siquidem diu acta sunt, quæ id efficerent, ut ubi illa agebantur, esse non possint..... Nequaquam ita agimus ut Deus propitietur. Mala enim incessabiliter malis addimus, et peccatis peccata cumulamus: et cum maxima nostri pars jam perierit, id agimus ut pereamus omnes. (p. 211—214.)

Quod non ubique, ut dixi, agantur quæ prius acta sunt, miseriæ est beneficium, non disciplinæ. Denique facile hoc probo. Da enim prioris temporis statum, et statim ubique sunt quæ fuerunt. Plus addo: quantum ad vota hominum pertinet, et si jam non ubique sunt, ubique ad hoc sunt: quia ubique ea populus vellet esse Romanus..... Et quid dicam de voluntate? per omnes hæc ferme, cum possunt, aguntur..... Ego amplius dico, non solum agi nunc illas ludicrorum infamium labes, quæ prius actæ sunt, sed criminosius multo agi, quam prius actæ sunt. Tunc enim integra Romani orbis membra florebant, angusta esse horrea publica opes fecerant: cunctarum urbium cives divitiis ac deliciis affluebant: vix poterat religionis auctoritas inter tantam rerum exuberantiam, morum tenere mensuram. Pascebantur tunc quidem passim in locis plurimis auctores turpium voluptatum; sed plena ac referta erant omnia. Nemo reipublicæ sumptus cogitabat, nemo dispendia, quia non sentiebatur expensa. Quærebat quodammodo ipsa respublica ubi perderet, quod penitus posset jam vix recipere: et ideo cumulus divitiarum, qui jam fere modum excesserat, etiam in res nugatorias redundabat. Nunc autem quid dici potest? Recesserunt priorum temporum facultates. Miseri jam sumus, et nec dum nugaces esse cessamus. (p. 215—217.)

De ludis enim publicis dicimus, ludibriis scilicet spei nostræ, ludibriis vitæ nostræ. Namque dum in theatris et circis ludimus, deperimus.... Dubium enim non est quod lædunt Deum [superstitiones] utpote idolis consecratæ. Colitur namque et honoratur Minerva in gymnasiis, Venus in theatris, Neptunus in circis, Mars in arenis, Mercurius in palæstris... Quicquid immunditiarum est, hoc exercetur in theatris: quicquid luxuriarum, in palæstris: quicquid immoderationis, in circis: quicquid furoris, in caveis. Alibi est impudicitia, alibi lascivia, alibi intemperantia, alibi insania. Ubique dæmon: imo per singula ludicrorum loca, universa dæmonum monstra. Præsident enim sedibus suo cultui dedicatis..... Si quando Deus... divitem bonis omnibus tranquillitatem et abundantiam dederit super vota crescentem: tanta secundarum rerum prosperitate corrumpimur, tanta morum insolentium pravitate vitiamur, ut et Dei ponitus obliviscamur et nostri... ad hoc tantum data a Deo quiete utimur, ut in ebrietate, ut in luxuria, ut in flagitiis, ut in rapinis, ut in omni scelere atque improbitate vivamus. (p. 220—222.)

PAGE 59.—No. V.

Sed videlicet qui corrumpimur rebus prosperis, corrigimur adversis: et quos intemperantes pax longa fecit, turbatio facit esse moderatos. Numquid populi civitatum, qui impudici rebus prosperis fuerant, asperis casti esse cœperunt? Numquid ebrietas, quæ in tranquillitate et abundantia creverat, hostili saltem depopulatione cessavit? Vastata est Italia tot jam cladibus: ergo Italorum vitia destiterunt? Obsessa est urbs Roma, et expugnata: ergo desierunt blasphemi ac furiosi esse Romani? Inundarunt Gallias gentes barbaræ: ergo quantum ad mores perditos spectat, non eadem sunt Gallorum crimina quæ fuerunt? Transcenderunt in Hispaniæ terras populi Vandalorum: mutata quidem est sors Hispaniæ, sed non mutata vitiositas. Postremo, ne qua pars mundi exitialibus malis esset immunis, navigare per fluctus bella cœperunt: quæ vastatis urbibus mari clausis, et eversis Sardinia ac Sicilia, id est fiscalibus horreis, atque abscissis velut vitalibus venis, Africam ipsam, id est quasi animam captivavere reipublicæ. Ecquid ingressis gentibus barbaris terram illam, forsitan vel metu vitia cessarunt: aut, sicut corrigi ad præsens etiam nequissimi quique servorum solent, modestiam saltem ac disciplinam terror extorsit? Quis æstimare hoc malum possit? Circumsonabant armis muros Cirtæ Carthaginis populi barbarorum: et ecclesia Carthaginensis insaniebat in circis, luxuriabat in theatris: alii foris jugulabantur, alii intus fornicabantur: pars plebis erat foris captiva hostium, pars intus captiva vitiorum. Cujus sors pejor fuerit, incertum est. Illi quidem erant extrinsecus carne, sed isti intus mente captivi: et ex duobus letalibus malis, levius, ut reor, est captivitatem corporis Christianum, quam captivitatem animæ sustinere, secundum illud quod docet Salvator ipse in evangelio, gravius multo animarum mortem esse, quam corporum. An credimus forte, quod captivus animo populus ille non fuerit, qui lætus tunc in suorum captivitatibus fuit? captivus corde et sensu non erat, qui inter suorum supplicia ridebat? qui jugulari se in suorum jugulis non intelligebat? qui mori se in suorum mortibus non putabat? Fragor, ut ita dixerim, extra muros, et intra muros, præliorum et ludicrorum confundebatur: vox morientium voxque bacchantium: ac vix discerni forsitan poterat plebis ejulatio quæ cadebat in bello, et sonus populi qui clamabat in circo. (p. 223—225.)

PAGE 60.—No. V.

Lugubre est referre quæ vidimus: senes, honoratos, decrepitos, Christianos, imminente admodum jam excidio civitatis, gulæ ac lasciviæ servientes. Quid primum accusandum est? quod honorati, an quod senes, an quod Christiani, an quod periclitantes? Quis enim hoc fieri posse credat, vel in securitate a senibus, vel in discrimine a pueris, vel unquam a Christianis? Jacebant in conviviis, obliti honoris, obliti ætatis, obliti professionis, obliti nominis sui. Principes civitatis cibo conferti, vinolentia dissoluti, clamoribus rabidi, bacchatione furiosi, nihil minus quam sensus sui: immo quia prope jugiter tales, nihil magis quam sensus sui. Sed cum hæc ita essent, plus multo est quod dicturus sum: finem perditioni huic nec civitatum excidia fecerunt. Denique expugnata est quater urbs Gallorum Trever opulentissima. Promptum est de quo dicam. Sufficere utique debuerat emendationi prima captivitas, ut instauratio peccatorum non instaurasset excidium. Sed quid plura? Incredibile est quod loquor: assiduitas illic calamitatum, augmentum criminum fuit. Sicut enim anguinum illud monstrum, ut fabulæ ferunt, quod multiplicabat occisio, ita etiam in Gallorum excellentissima urbe iis ipsis quibus coercebantur scelera plagis crescebant, ut putares, pœnam ipsorum criminum quasi matrem esse vitiorum. Et quid plura? Ad hoc quotidie malorum pullulantium multiplicatione perventum est, ut facilius esset urbem illam sine habitatore, quam ullum pene habitatorem esse sine crimine.

Igitur hoc in illa. Quid in alia non longe, sed prope ejusdem magnificentiæ civitate? nonne eadem et rerum ruina pariter et morum? Nam præter cetera, cum duobus illic præcipuis et generalibus malis avaritia et ebrietate omnia concidissent, ad hoc postremo rabida vini aviditate perventum est, ut principes urbis ipsius ne tunc quidem de conviviis surgerent,

cum jam hostis urbem intraret; adeo etiam Deus ipsis evidenter, ut credo, manifestare voluit cur perirent, cum per quam rem ad perditionem ultimam venerant, eam ipsam agerent cum perirent. Vidi ego illic res lacrymabiles, nihil scilicet inter pueros differre et senes. Una erat scurrilitas, una levitas: simul omnia luxus, potationes, perditiones, cuncta omnes pariter agebant: ludebant, ebriabantur, enecabantur, lasciviebant in conviviis, vetuli, et honorati; ad vivendum prope jam imbecilles, ad vinum prævalidissimi; infirmi ad ambulandum, robusti ad bibendum; ad gressum nutabundi, ad saltandum expediti. Et quid plura? In hoc per cuncta illa, quæ diximus, devoluti sunt, ut compleretur in eis dictum illud sermonis sacri: 'Vinum et mulieres apostatare faciunt à Deo.' Nam dum bibunt, ludunt, mœchantur, insaniunt, Christum negare cœperunt. Et miramur post omnia ista, si ruinam rerum suarum passi sunt, qui tanto ante mentibus corruerunt. Nemo itaque urbem illam in excidio suo tantum periisse credat. Ubi namque talia acta sunt, prius jam perierant quam perirent. (p. 226—229.)

Itaque barbaris pene in conspectu omnium sitis, nullus metus erat hominum, non custodia civitatum. Tanta peccatorum cæcitas fuit, ut cum absque dubio nullus perire vellet, nullus tamen id ageret ne periret. Totum incuria et segnities, totum negligentia et gula, totum ebrietas et somnolentia possidebant. (p. 229, 230.)

Atque hæc fuerunt fortasse, jam non sunt, aut unquam esse cessabunt. Videlicet si qua adhuc hodie aut civitas, aut provincia vel plagis cœlestibus afficitur, vel hostili populatione vastatur, humiliatur, convertitur, emendatur: et non cunctos ferme Romani nominis populos prius est interire, quam corrigi: non prius ipsos, quam in ipsis vitia non esse. Denique id breviter probari potest, excisa ter continuatis eversionibus summa urbe Gallorum, cum omnis civitas bustum esset, malis et post-excidia crescentibus. Nam quos hostis in excidio non occiderat, post excidium calamitas obruebat, cum id quod in excidio evaserat morti, post excidium superesset calamitati. Alios enim impressa altius vulnera longis mortibus necabant: alios ambustos hostium flammis etiam post flammas pœna torquebat. Alii interibant fame, alii nuditate, alii tabescentes, alii rigentes: ac sic in unum exitum mortis per diversa moriendi genera corruebant. Et quid plura? unius excidio urbis affligebantur aliæ quoque civitates. Jacebant siquidem passim (quod ipse vidi atque sustinui) utriusque sexus cadavera nuda, lacera, urbis oculos incestantia, avibus canibusque laniata: lues erat viventium, fœtor funereus mortuorum, mors de morte exhalabatur, ac sic etiam qui excidiis supradictæ urbis non interfuerant, mala alieni excidii perferebant. Et quid post hæc, inquam, quid post hæc omnia? quis æstimare hoc amentiæ genus possit? Pauci nobiles, qui excidio superfuerant, quasi pro summo deletæ urbis remedio, circenses ab imperatoribus postulabant.

Vellem mihi in hoc loco ad exequendum rerum dignitatem parem negotio eloquentiam dari, scilicet ut tantum virtutis esset in querimonia, quantum doloris in causa. Quis enim existimare possit, quid primum in his, de quibus diximus, accusandum sit, irreligiositas, an stultitia, an luxuria, an amentia. Totum quippe in illis est. Quid enim aut irreligiosius, quam petere aliquid injuria Dei: aut quid stultius, quam quid petas non considerare: aut quid tam perditi luxus, quam in luctu res desiderare luxuriæ: aut quid amentius, quam in malis esse, et malorum intelligentiam non habere? Quanquam in iis omnibus nulla res minus culpanda est, quam amentia: quia voluntas crimen non habet, ubi furore peccatur. Quo magis hi de quibus loquimur accusandi sunt, quia sani insaniebant. Circenses ergo, Treveri, desideratis, et hoc vastati, hoc expugnati, post cladem, post sanguinem, post supplicia, post captivitatem, post tot eversæ urbis excidia? quid lacrymabilius hac stultitia? quid luctuosius hac amentia? fateor, miserrimos vos esse credidi, cum excidia passi estis: sed miseriores vos video, cum et spectacula postulatis. Putabam enim, vos in excidiis rem tantum atque substantiam; nesciebam etiam sensum atque intelligentiam perdidisse. Theatra igitur quæritis? Circum a principibus postulatis? cui quæso statui, cui populo, cui civitati? urbi exustæ et perditæ, plebi captivæ, et interemptæ, quæ aut periit, aut luget. De qua etiamsi quid superest, totum calamitatis est: quæ cuncta aut mœstitudine est anxia, aut lacrymis exhausta, aut orbitate prostrata: in qua nescias

pene cujus sit sors pejor ac deterior, interfectorum, aut viventium. Tantæ namque miseriæ sunt superstitum, ut infelicitatem vicerint mortuorum. Ludicra ergo publica, Trevir, petis: ubi quæso exercenda? an super bustum et cineres, super ossa et sanguinem peremptorum? Quæ namque urbis pars his malis omnibus vacat? ubi non cruor fusus? ubi non strata corpora? ubi non concisorum membra lacerata? Ubique facies captæ urbis, ubique terror captivitatis, ubique imago mortis. Jacent reliquiæ infelicissimæ plebis super tumulos mortuorum suorum: et tu circenses rogas. Nigra est incendio civitas; et tu vultum festivitatis usurpas. Lugent cuncta; tu lætus es. Insuper etiam illecebris flagitiosissimis Deum provocas, et superstitionibus pessimis iram divinitatis irritas. Non miror, plane non miror, tibi evenisse mala quæ consecuta sunt. Nam quia tria te excidia non correxerunt, quarto perire meruisti. (p. 230—234.)

Page 61.—No. V.

Nos nec ignorantia labimur, nec religionis expertes sumus, nec prosperitate rerum ac securitate corrumpimur. Omnia siquidem e diverso sunt. Religionem novimus; ignorantia non excusamur. Pacem et divitias priorum temporum non habemus. Omnia quæ fuerant aut ablata aut immutata sunt; sola tantum vitia creverunt. Nihil nobis de pace et prosperitate pristina reliquum est, nisi sola omnino crimina quæ prosperitatem non esse fecerunt. (p. 239).

Page 62.—No. V.

Utinam pœna ipsa prodesset. Illud gravius ac luctuosius multo, quod post pœnam nulla correctio est. Curare nos vult castigationibus suis Dominus, sed curam non remedia sequuntur . . . immo, quod est gravius, cura ipsa deteriores sumus. . . . . Et miseri pariter et luxuriosi sumus. . . . . Sint vitia ista felicium; et longe flagitiosius laboraverunt ad exacerbandum . . . . Ipsos interrogemus a quibus acta sunt; falsum sit quod diximus, si negarint. Fatentur enim: et quidem (quod est gravius) sic fatentur, ut in ipsa confessione non doleant. Idem enim nunc est animus in fatentibus, qui in agentibus fuit. Sicut tunc non puduit flagitia committere, sic nunc omnino non pœnitet flagitiosa fecisse. Exceptis tamen perpaucis—(p. 242, 243) Cæteri autem, et plurimi ferme ac nobilissimi, prope idem omnes: unus gurges, omnium gula: pene unum lupanar, omnium vita. Et quid dicam de lupanaribus? minoris etiam criminis lupanar puto. Meretrices enim quæ illic sunt, fœdus connubiale non norunt, ac per hoc non maculant quod ignorant. Impudicitiæ enim piaculo sunt obnoxiæ; sed reatu tamen adulterii non tenentur. Adde huic, quod et pauca ferme sunt lupanaria, et paucæ quæ in his vitam infelicissimam vivunt. Damnavere meretrices apud Aquitanos: at ubi ea civitas in locupletissima ac nobilissima sui parte non quasi lupanar fuit? Quis potentum ac divitum non in luto libidinis vixit? Quis non se barathro sordidissimæ colluvionis immersit? Quis conjugii fidem reddidit? immo quantum ad passivitatem libidinis pertinet, quis non conjugem in numerum ancillarum redegit? et ad hoc venerabilis connubii sacramenta dejecit, ut nulla in domo ejus vilior videretur in maritali despectione, quam quæ erat princeps matrimonii dignitate.

Cogitat forte aliquis, non ita ad plenum esse ut loquor: habuisse namque illic matresfamilias jus suum, et dominarum honorem potestatemque tenuisse. Verum est, habuerunt quidem multæ integrum jus dominii; sed nulla ferme impollutum jus matrimonii: et nos modo non quærimus, quæ mulierum potestas, sed quam virorum corrupta fuerit disciplina. Quamvis nec potestatem quidem illic matresfamilias integram habuisse dicam, quia quæcunque jus connubii inviolatum ac salvum non habet, nec dominium salvum habet. Haud multum enim matrona abest a vilitate servarum, ubi paterfamilias ancillarum maritus est. Quis autem Aquitanorum divitum non hoc fuit? quem non sibi ancillæ impudicissimæ, aut adulterum, aut maritum jure dixerunt? 'Equi' enim 'emissarii,' ut propheta ait, 'in fœminas facti sunt. Unusquisque enim ad uxorem proximi sui irruebat.' Atque illi de quibus hæc scripta legimus, et minore fortasse crimine, et minore, ut reor, numero criminum ac passivitate peccabant. Hi autem vere ut emis-

sarii equi non ad paucas tantum, sed pene ad omnes vernulas suas, id est quasi ad greges proprios irruebant, et in morem eorum pecudum, qui mariti gregum appellantur, fervidæ libidinis debacchatione grassantes, in quamcunque eos primum fœminam ardens impudicitiæ furor traxerat, irruebant. Hic jam quæro a sapientibus, cum hæc ita essent, quales putent fuisse illic familias, ubi tales erant patresfamilias? Quanta servorum illic corruptela, ubi dominorum tanta corruptio? (p. 242—246.)

PAGE 64.—No. V.

Nemini dubium est Aquitanos omnes populos medullam fere omnium Galliarum, et uber totius fœcunditatis habuisse: nec solum fœcunditatis, sed quæ præponi interdum fœcunditati solent, voluptatis, jocunditatis, pulchritudinis. Adeo illic omnis admodum regio aut intertexta vineis, aut florulenta pratis, aut distincta culturis, aut consita pomis, aut amœnata lucis, aut irrigata fontibus, aut interfusa fluminibus, aut circundata messibus fuit: ut vere possessores et domini terræ illius, non tam soli istius portionem, quam paradisi imaginem possedisse videantur. Quid ergo post ista omnia? officiosiores absque dubio Deo esse debuerant quos specialiter Deus abundantissima beneficiorum suorum dote ditaverat. . . . Et quid post hæc omnia, quid secutum est? quid, nisi cuncta quæ diversa sunt? in omnibus quippe Galliis sicut divitiis primi fuere, sic vitiis. Nusquam enim improbior voluptas, nusquam inquinatior vita, nusquam corruptior disciplina. Hanc pro muneribus sacris dederunt Domino retributionem: ut in quantum eos beneficiis suis ille ad se illexerat ad propitiandum, in tantum illi ab eo recederent. Dominus quasi corporis sui caput est, et vita ejus cunctis quasi norma vivendi. Pessimumque est hoc in hoc negotio, quod libentius omnes deteriora sectantur: et facilius mala institutio damnat bonos, quam bona emendat malos. Porro autem cum etiam boni atque honesti patresfamilias famulos bonos facere non possint, quantam illic putamus fuisse labem familiarum, ubi domini erant impuritatis exemplum? Quamvis non exemplum illic tantummodo malum fuerit, sed vis ac necessitas quædam: quia parere impudicissimis dominis famulæ cogebantur invitæ, et libido dominantium, necessitas subjectarum erat. Ex quo intelligi potest, quantum cœnum impudicarum sordium fuerit, ubi sub impurissimis dominis castas esse, etiamsi voluissent, fœminas non licebat.

Sed videlicet difficile hoc probari potest, et nulla omnino extant præteritarum turpitudinum flagitiorumque vestigia. Ecce etiam nunc multi ex eis, licet patria careant, et in comparatione præteritarum opum pauperes vivant, pejores ferme sunt quam fuerunt. Pejores autem non uno modo, quia etsi eadem faciunt quæ ante faciebant, hoc ipso tamen deteriores sunt, quia a scelere non cessant. Siquidem facinora eorum etsi majora non sunt, attamen plura sunt: ac per hoc etsi criminum novitate non crescunt, pluralitate cumulantur. Adde autem quod hæc, ut dixi, faciunt jam senes: adde quod pauperes. Utrumque enim sceleris augmentum est. Minus siquidem prodigiosum est peccare juvenes, peccare locupletes. Quæ autem in iis spes aut remedium est, qui ab usitata impuritate, nec miseriarum egestate, nec vitæ extremitate revocantur? Esto namque: quosdam aut stulta præsumtio longæ vitæ aut spes quandoque agendæ pœnitentiæ consoletur: nonne novum hoc monstri genus est, esse aliquos etiam in morte vitiosos? Quæ cum ita sint, numquid est aliquid quod dici amplius possit? Sed adhuc tamen addamus, scilicet quod multi hæc agunt hodie etiam inter hostes siti, et quotidiano discrimine ac timore captivi. Cumque ob impurissimam vitam traditi a Deo barbaris fuerint, impuritates tamen ipsas etiam inter barbaros non relinquunt.

Sed tales forte hostes sunt inter quos agunt, ut eos ista delectent, et offendantur gravissime, si cum impudici sint, videant castos esse Romanos: quod si ita esset, nequaquam tamen facere nos improbos improbitas deberet aliena: quia quemlibet hominum magis sibi præstare convenit ut sit bonus, quam alteri ut sit malus: et plus id laborandum est ut placeamus Deo per honestatem, quam ut hominibus per impuritatem; ac proinde etiam si inter impudicos quis barbaros vivat, magis tamen pudicitiam amet, siquidem quæ sibi expedit, quam impudicitiam, quæ impuris hostibus placet. Sed quid accidit insuper ad mala nostra? inter pudicos barbaros impudici sumus. Plus adhuc dico, offenduntur barbari ipsi impuritatibus nostris. Esse inter Gothos non licet scortatorem

Gothum; soli inter eos præjudicio nationis ac nominis permittuntur impuri esse Romani. Et quæ nobis, rogo, spes ante Deum est? Impudicitiam nos diligimus, Gothi execrantur: puritatem nos fugimus, illi amant; fornicatio apud illos crimen atque discrimen est; apud nos decus. Et putamus, nos ante Deum posse consistere? Putamus nos posse salvos esse, quando omne impuritatis scelus, omnis impudicitiæ turpitudo a Romanis admittitur, et a barbaris vindicatur? Hic nunc illos requiro, qui meliores nos putant esse quam barbaros. Dicant quid horum vel paucissimi Gothi faciunt, vel quid non horum Romani omnes, vel pene omnes. Et miramur, si terræ vel Aquitanorum, vel nostrum omnium a Deo barbaris datæ sunt; cum ea quæ Romani polluerant fornicatione, nunc mundent barbari castitate.

Sed forte hoc in Aquitanicis tantum. Transeamus etiam ad alias mundi partes, ne de solis tantummodo Gallis dixisse videamur. Quid Hispanias, nonne vel eadem, vel majora forsitan vitia perdiderunt? Quas quidem cœlestis ira etiam si aliis quibuslibet barbaris tradidisset, digna tamen flagitiorum tormenta toleraverunt, puritatis inimici. Sed accessit hoc ad manifestandam illic impudentiæ damnationem, ut Vandalis potissimum, id est publicis barbaris traderentur. Dupliciter in illa Hispanorum captivitate Deus ostendere voluit, quantum et odisset acrius libidinem, et diligeret castitatem, cum et Vandalos, ob solam maxime pudicitiam illis superponeret, et Hispanos ob solam vel maxime impudicitiam subjugaret. Quid enim? Numquid non erant in omni orbe terrarum barbari fortiores, quibus Hispaniæ traderentur? multi absque dubio, imo ni fallor, omnes. Sed ideo ille infirmissimis hostibus cuncta tradidit, ut ostenderet scilicet, non vires valere, sed causam: neque nos tunc ignavissimorum quorundam hostium fortitudine obrui, sed sola vitiorum nostrorum impuritate superari. (p. 248—255.)

Page 65.—No. V.

'Ne glorietur,' inquit, 'contra me Israel, et dicat; Meis viribus liberatus sum.' Audiant omnes contraria et blasphema jactantes: audiant hæc, spem suam in homine ponentes: loqui universos adversum se Deus dicit, qui liberari se viribus suis posse præsumunt. Quis autem est Romanorum non ita dicens? Quis est non ita sentiens? Quis nostræ partis non prope jugiter in hac parte blasphemat? Nullas esse jam reipublicæ vires, omnium conscientiæ est, et ne sic quidem agnoscimus, cujus hoc beneficiis, quod adhuc vivimus, debeamus. Si quando enim nobis prosperi aliquid præter spem nostram et meritum Deus tribuit, alius ascribit hoc fortunæ, alius eventui, alius ordinationi ducum, alius consilio, alius magistro, alius patrocinio; nullus Deo. (p. 258.) At non ita Gothi, non ita Vandali, malis licet doctoribus instituti, meliores tamen in hac parte quam nostri. Offendi quosdam quamvis suspicer his quæ diximus: sed quia veritas magis quam offensio cogitanda est, dicam et sæpe dicam, non ita Gothi, non ita Vandali, qui et in discrimine positi opem a Deo postulant, et prosperitatis suæ munus divinis nominibus appellant. (p. 259, 260) Ipse rex hostium [Gothorum], quantum res prodidit ac probavit, usque ad diem pugnæ stratus cilicio preces fudit, ante bellum in oratione jacuit, ad bellum de oratione surrexit. Priusquam pugnam manu capesseret, supplicatione pugnavit, et ideo fidens processit ad pugnam. . . . . Non dissimiliter illud etiam apud Vandalos. . . . . Hic nunc requiro, quis hoc unquam e nostris partibus fecerit, aut quis non irrisus fuerat, si putasset esse faciendum? Irrisus utique, sicut a nostris omnia ferme religiosa ridentur. Et ideo quid prodesse nobis prærogativa illa religiosi nominis potest, quod nos catholicos esse dicimus, quod fideles esse jactamus. (p. 262—264.)

Et postea quid fuit totum Africæ territorium, quam domus una vitiorum, aheno illi similis de quo Prophete dicit—(Ez. 42). . . . Quid namque piaculorum est non illic semper admissum? Ne de omnibus dicam, quia et enormia fere sunt, et sciri et dici tanta non possunt, de sola vel maxime obscœnitate impuritatum loquor: et quod est gravius, sacrilegiorum. Prætermitto in aliquo rabiem cupiditatis, vitium totius generis humani. Prætereo avaritiæ inhumanitatem, quod proprium est Romanorum pene omnium malum. Relinquatur ebrietas, nobilibus ignobilibusque communis. Taceatur superbia et tumor, tam peculiare hoc divitum regnum est, ut aliquid forsitan de jure

suo se putent perdere, si hinc sibi alius quicquam voluerit vindicare. Transcatur denique prope omne fraudum, falsitatum, perjuriorum nefas. Nulla unquam his malis Romana civitas caruit, et specialius hoc scelus Afrorum omnium fuit. Nam sicut in sentinam profundæ navis colluviones omnium sordium: sic in mores eorum, quasi ex omni mundo, vitia fluxerunt. Nullam enim improbitatem scio quæ illic non redundaverit, cum utique etiam paganæ ac ferinæ gentes, etsi habeant specialiter mala propria, non est tamen in his hoc corpus omnium. (p. 265—269.)

Quod Vandali ad Africam transierunt, non est divinæ severitati, sed Afrorum sceleri deputandum . . . in quos omnia simul improbitatum atque impuritatum genera confluxerint. . . . Cæteri namque homines etsi nonnullis flagitiorum vitiis obligati sunt, quibusdam tamen non implicantur: etsi vinolentia non carent, malivolentia carent: etsi libidine æstuant, rapacitati non serviunt. Multos denique etsi accusat incontinentia corporum, simplicitas commendat animorum. In Afris vel pene omnibus nihil horum est, quod ad utrumque pertineat, id est bonum æque ac malum: quia totum admodum malum. Adeo exclusa naturæ originalis sinceritate, aliam quodammodo in his naturam vitia fecerunt. Exceptis enim paucissimis Dei servis, ubi non omnia execratione digna? Gothorum perfida, sed pudica est: Alanorum impudica, sed hospitales: Saxones crudelitate cfferi, sed minus perfida: Franci mendaces, sed castitate venerandi. Omnes denique gentes habent sicut peculiaria mala, ita etiam quædam bona. In Afris pene omnibus nescio quid non malum. Si accusanda est inhumanitas, inhumani sunt. Si ebrietas, ebriosi sunt. Si falsitas, fallacissimi. Si dolus, fraudulentissimi. Si cupiditas, cupidissimi. Si perfidia, perfidissimi. Impuritas eorum atque blasphemia his omnibus admiscenda non sunt: quia illis quæ supra diximus malis aliorum gentium vitia, his autem etiam sua ipsorum vicerunt.

Ac primum, ut de impuritate dicamus, quis nescit Africam totam obscœnis libidinum tædis semper arsisse: non ut terram ac sedem hominum, sed ut Ætnam putes impudicarum fuisse flammarum. Nam sicut Ætna intestinis quibusdam naturæ ferventis ardoribus, sic illa abominandis jugiter fornicationum ignibus æstuavit. Nec volo in hac re assertionibus meis credi: testimonium requiratur generis humani. Quis non omnes omnino Afros impudicos generaliter sciat, nisi forte ad Deum conversos, id est fide ac religione mutatos. Sed hoc tam rarum est ac novum, quam rarum videri potest, quemlibet ganeonem non esse ganeonem, aut quemcunque sævum, non esse sævum. Tam infrequens est enim hoc et inusitatum, impudicum non esse Afrum, quam novum et inauditum, Afrum non esse Afrum. Ita enim generale in eis malum impuritatis est, ut quicunque ex eis impudicus esse desierit, Afer non esse videatur. Nec discurram per loca singula, aut cunctas discutiam civitates, ne studiose videar quærere, aut investigare quæ dicam: una tantum universarum illic urbium principe, et quasi matre contentus sum, illa scilicet Romanis arcibus semper æmula, armis quondam et fortitudine, post splendore et dignitate. Carthaginem dico et urbi Romæ maxime adversariam, et in Africano orbe quasi Romam, quæ mihi ideo in exemplum ac testimonium sola sufficit: quia universa penitus, quibus in toto mundo disciplina reipublicæ vel procuratur, vel regitur, in se habuit. Illic enim omnia officiorum publicorum instrumenta, illic artium liberalium scholæ, illic philosophorum officinæ, cuncta denique vel linguarum gymnasia vel morum: illic quoque etiam copiæ militares, et regentes militiam potestates, illic honor proconsularis, illic quotidianus judex et rector, quantum ad nomen quidem proconsul, sed quantum ad potentiam consul: illic denique omnes rerum dispensatores, et differentes inter se tam gradu, quam vocabulo dignitates, omnium ut ita dicam, platearum et compitorum procuratores, cuncta ferme et loca urbis, et membra populi gubernantes. Hac ergo tantum contenti sumus ad exemplum ac testimonium ceterarum, ut intelligamus scilicet quales illæ fuerunt civitates, quæ minores habuerunt probi officii procurationes, cum viderimus qualis extiterit ubi summi semper fuere rectores.

Quo loco prope est, ut pœniteat me promissionis meæ, id est quod superius spopondi, cunctis prope Afrorum criminibus prætermissis de impuritatibus præcipue ac blasphemiis eorum me esse dicturum. Video namque scaturientem vitiis civitatem, video urbem omnium iniquitatum genere furentem, plenam quidem turbis, sed magis turpitudinibus: plenam divitiis, sed magis vitiis: vincentes

se invicem homines nequitia flagitiorum suorum, alios rapacitate, alios impuritate certantes, alios vino languidos, alios eruditate distentos, hos sertis redimitos, illos unguentis oblitos, cunctos vario luxus marcore perditos, sed pene omnes una errorum morte prostratos: non omnes quidem vinolentia temulentos, sed omnes tamen peccatis ebrios. Populos putares non sani status, non sui sensus, non animo incolumes, non gradu, quasi in morem bacharum crapulæ catervatim inservientes. Jam vero illud cujusmodi, aut quam grave, genere quidem dispar, sed iniquitate non dispar, nisi forte in hoc dispar quia majus. Proscriptiones dico orphanorum, viduarum afflictiones, pauperum cruces qui ingemiscentes quotidie ad Deum, finem malorum imprecantes, et quod gravissimum est, interdum vi nimiæ amaritudinis etiam adventum hostium postulantes, aliquando a Deo impetraverunt, ut eversionem tandem a barbaris in commune tolerarent, quam soli ante a Romanis toleraverant.

Sed esto: hæc omnia prætermittantur, quia et in toto ferme aguntur orbe Romano, et spopondi me de his malis nec pauca dicturum. Quid ergo impudicitia atque impuritas de qua loquor, nunquid non ad eversionem Afrorum sola sufficeret? quæ namque fuit pars civitatis non plena sordibus, quæ intra urbem platea aut semita non lupanar? Adeo pene omnia compita, omnes vias, quasi foveæ libidinum interciderant, aut quasi retia prætexebant, ut etiam qui ab hac re penitus abhorrerent, tamen vitare vix possent. Latronum quodammodo excubias videres, commeantium viatorum spolia captantes, qui insidiarum frequentium densitate, ita omnes admodum calles, omnes anfractus, ac diverticula sepsissent, ut nullus ferme tam cautus esset, qui non in aliquos insidiarum laqueos incurreret, etiam qui se de plurimis expedisset. Fœtebant, ut ita dixerim, cuncti urbis illius cives cœno libidinis, spurcum sibimetipsis mutuo impudicitiæ nidorem inhalantes. Sed horrori eis tamen horrida ista non erant, quia idem omnes horror infecerat. Unam enim illic putes fuisse libidinum fornicationumque sentinam, cœnum quasi ex omni platearum et cloacarum labe collectum.

Et quæ illic spes esse poterat, ubi præter id quod in Domini templo erat, nihil videri penitus nisi sordidum non licebat? Quanquam quid dicam in Dei templo? hoc quippe totum ad sacerdotes tantum et clerum pertinet, quos non discutio, quia Domini mei ministerio reverentiam servo: et quos ita solos puros arbitror fuisse in altario, sicut pereuntibus Sodomis solum Loth fuisse legimus in monte. Ceterum quantum ad plebem pertinet, quis in illo numero castus fuit? Castum dico? quis non fornicarius, non adulter, et hoc sine cessatione, sine termino? Rursum clamitem itaque necesse est: quæ spes in illo populo esse poterat, ubi cum unus interdum adulter plebem ecclesiasticam polluat, ibi inter tot millia si diligentissime quæreres, castum vel in ecclesia reperire vix posses? Plus multo dicam, utinam hæc essent sola quæ diximus, et contenta illic virorum impuritas fuisset solis sordidarum mulierum fornicationibus inquinari. Illud gravius et scelestius, quod illa de quibus beatus apostolus Paulus cum summa animi lamentatione conqueritur, in Afris pene omnia fuerunt: scilicet 'quia masculi relicto naturali usu fœminæ, exarserunt in desideriis suis invicem, masculi in masculos turpitudinem exercentes, et mercedem quam oportuit erroris sui in semetipsis recipientes. Et sicut non probaverunt Deum se habere in notitia, tradidit illos in reprobum sensum, ut facerent quæ non convenit.' Numquid hoc beatus apostolus de barbaris aut feris gentibus dixit? non utique, sed de nobis, id est specialiter de Romanis: quos quidem Afri, quia nequaquam olim vincere imperio ac sublimitate valuerunt, quod potuerunt unum, impuritate vicerunt. Quicumque ergo jure se mihi irasci putat, magis apostolo irascatur, scilicet quia quod dicimus nos fuisse Afros, hoc ille dixit dominos eorum esse Romanos.

Sed forte id vel occultum quod loquimur erat, aut saltem hoc providebant procuratores, ne publicæ passim disciplinæ oculos, civitatis sceleră propalata pollucrent. Quod si factum utique fuisset, quamvis si multi extitissent opere ipso sordidi, non omnes tamen fuerant visu atque animo sordidati: et solet res flagitiosa quando agitur occulte, fidem facinoris non mereri. Supra autem omnem monstruosi piaculi execrationem est, scelus summum admittere, et pudorem sceleris non habere. Quid, rogo, fieri illic prodigiosius potuit? in

urbe christiana, in urbe ecclesiastica, quam quondam doctrinis suis apostoli instituerant, quam passionibus suis martyres coronarant, viri in semet ipsis fœminas profitebantur, et hoc sine pudoris umbraculo, sine ullo verecundiæ amictu, ac si parum quippe piaculi esset, si malo illo malorum tantum inquinarentur autores: per publicam sceleris professionem, fiebat etiam scelus integræ civitatis. Videbat quippe hæc universa civitas, et patiebatur: videbant judices, et acquiescebant: populus videbat, et applaudebat: ac sic diffuso per totam urbem dedecoris scelerisque consortio, etsi commune hoc omnibus non faciebant actus, commune omnibus faciebat assensus. Sed finis aliquis forsitan mali, aut emendatio aliqua labis istius fuit. Quis credere aut audire etiam possit, convertisse in muliebrem tolerantiam viros, non usum suum tantum atque naturam, sed etiam vultum, incessum, habitum, et totum quicquid penitus aut in sexu est, aut in usu viri: adeo versa in diversum omnia erant? ut cum viris nihil magis pudori esse oporteat, quam si muliebre aliquid in se habere videantur: illic nihil viris quibusdam turpius videretur, quam si in aliquo viri viderentur.

Sed paucorum hoc, inquis, dedecus fuit? et quod a pluribus perpetratum est, cunctis nocere non potuit. Jam quidem supra dixi, sæpissime in Dei populo etiam unius facinus pestem fuisse multorum: sicut ex furto Achar fugit populus, sicut ex zelo Saulis exorta est pestilentia, sicut ex David numeratione mortalitas. Ita est enim Dei ecclesia quasi oculus. Nam ut in oculum etiamsi parva sordes incidat, totum lumen occæcat; sic in ecclesiastico corpore etiamsi pauci sordida faciant, prope totum ecclesiastici splendoris lumen offuscatur. Et ideo Salvator ipse principalem ecclesiæ partem oculum nominavit, dicens: 'Lucerna corporis tui est oculus tuus. Si oculus tuus fuerit simplex, totum corpus tuum lucidum erit. Sin autem oculus tuus nequam fuerit, totum corpus tuum tenebrosum erit.' Unde et apostolus: 'Nescitis,' inquit, 'quia modicum fermentum totam massam corrumpit:' quamvis ego illic non modicum de hoc malo, sed nimis, pene dicam: non quia molles plurimi fuerint, sed quia mollities paucorum, labes est plurimorum. Nam etsi pauci sunt, qui dedecorosa sustineant, multi tamen sunt qui paucorum sordibus polluantur. Quemadmodum enim una meretrix multos fornicatores facit, sic plurimam populi partem inquinat paucorum effœminatorum abominanda permixtio. Et nescio qui eorum ante Deum deteriores sint, cum æquali in scriptis sacris sorte damnentur. 'Neque molles enim,' inquit, 'neque masculorum concubitores regnum Dei possidebunt.' Illud ergo magis ingemescendum atque lugendum est, quod tale hoc scelus crimen etiam toti reipublicæ videbatur. Et universa Romani nominis dignitas, facinoris prodigiosi inurebatur infamia. Cum enim muliebrem habitum viri sumerent, et magis muliebrem gradum fingerent, cum indicia quædam sibi monstruosæ impuritatis innecterent, et fœmineis tegminum illigamentis capita velarent, atque hoc publice in civitate Romana, urbe illic summa et celeberrima: quid aliud quam Romani Imperii dedecus erat, ut in medio reipublicæ sinu execrandissimum nefas palam liceret admitti? Potestas quippe magna et potentissima, quæ inhibere scelus maximum potest, quasi probat debere fieri, si sciens patitur perpetrari. In cujus enim manu est ut prohibeat, jubet agi, si non prohibet admitti. (p. 272—284.)

Ipsos illos Africæ vastatores, Afrorum populis comparemus. . . . Quotus enim quisque sapientum est, quem secunda non mutent? . . . In tanta affluentia rerum atque luxuria, nullus eorum mollis effectus est. Numquid parum videtur? Certe familiariter etiam hoc nobiles fecere Romani. Sed quid adhuc addo? In illis nullus qui Romanorum illic mollium pollueretur incestu. Certe hoc apud Romanos jampridem tale existimatum est ut virtus potius putaretur esse quam vitium: et illi se magis viribus præditos esse crederent, qui maxime viros fœminei usus probrositate fugissent. Unde etiam illud fuit, quod lixis puerorum quondam exercitus prosequentibus, hæc quasi bene meritis expeditionibus stipendia laboris decernebantur, ut quia viri fortes essent, viros in mulieres demutarent. Pro nefas! et hoc Romani . . . non antiqui, jam scilicet corrupti, jam dissoluti, jam sibi et suis dispares, et Græcis quam Romanis similiores. . . . Hæc ergo impuritas in Romanis et ante Christi evangelium esse cœpit: et quod est gravius, nec post evangelium cessavit. Et quis post hæc non admiretur

populos Vandalorum, qui ingressi urbem opulentissimam, ubi hæc omnia passim agebantur, ita delicias corruptorum hominum adepti sunt, ut corruptelas morum repudiarent. . . . Abominati enim sunt virorum impuritates. Plus adhuc addo: abominati etiam fœminarum: horruerunt lustra ac lupanaria. . . . Sed multo plus est. Illud magni ac singularis est meriti, non solum ipsum labe non pollui, sed providere etiam ne unquam alii polluantur. (p. 284—287.)

Quis credat Vandalos in civitatibus Romanis ista fecisse? Remota quippe est ab illis omnis carnis impuritas. At quomodo remota? non sicut removeri aliqua a Romanis solet, qui statuunt non adulterandum, et primi adulterant: statuunt non furandum, et furantur: quamvis pene non possim dicere quod furentur: non enim sunt quæ agunt furta, sed latrocinia. Punit enim judex in alio peculatum, cum sit ipse peculator: punit rapinam, cum sit ipse raptor: punit sicarium, cum ipse sit gladiator: punit effractores claustrorum et ostiorum, cum ipse sit eversor urbium: punit expoliatores domorum, cum ipse sit expoliator civitatum atque provinciarum. Atque hoc utinam illi tantum qui in potestate sunt positi, et quibus jus exercendorum latrociniorum honos ipse largitur. Illud gravius ac magis intolerabile, quod hoc faciunt et privati iisdem ante honoribus functi. Tantum eis adeptus semel honor dat beneficii, ut semper habeant jus latrocinandi. Adeo etiam cum destiterint ad administrandum potestatem habere publicam, non desinunt tamen ad latrocinandum potestatem habere privatam. (p. 288, 289.)

Sic impudicitiam summoverunt quod impudicas conservaverunt, non interficientes mulierculas infelices. . . . Sed ita errantes emendaverunt, ut factum eorum medicina esset, pœna non esset: jusserunt siquidem et compulerunt omnes ad maritalem thorum transire meretrices: scorta in connubia verterunt. . . . Addiderunt quoque hoc ad libidinem comprimendam severas pudicitiæ sanctiones decretorum, gladio impudicitiam coercentes, ut puritatem scilicet utriusque sexus, et domi connubii servaret affectus, et in publico metus legum. . . . Erubescamus quæso et confundamur. Jam apud Gothos impudici non sunt, nisi Romani: jam apud Vandalos nec Romani. Tantum apud illos profecit studium castimoniæ, tantum severitas disciplinæ, non solum quod ipsi casti sint, sed ut rem dicamus novam, rem incredibilem, rem pene etiam inauditam, castos etiam Romanos esse fecerunt. (p. 290—293.)

Videamus quas Socrates de pudicitia leges sanxerit, et quas illi de quibus loquimur. Uxorem, inquit Socrates, propriam nullus habeat, matrimonia enim cunctis debent esse communia. . . . Scilicet sicut etiam Romanus Cato, id est, alius Italiæ Socrates. Ecce quæ sunt et Romanæ et Atticæ sapientiæ exempla. . . . Conferantur enim cum iis quæ ille constituit, illa quæ statuerunt ii, quos dominari Africæ Deus jussit. Statuit ille, ut nullus penitus suam haberet uxorem; isti ut nullus penitus non suam. Ille ut omnis fœmina viris omnibus subjaceret: isti ut nulla fœmina alium quam suum virum nosceret. Ille generationem mixtam atque confusam, isti puram et ordinatam: ille omnes domus scortari voluit, isti nullam: ille in cunctis habitaculis lupanaria est conatus ædificare, isti etiam e civitatibus sustulerunt: ille prostare voluit omnes virgines; isti castas fecere meretrices. Atque utinam hic Socratis tantum error fuisset, non et complurium Romanorum ac pene omnium, qui etsi nequaquam Socratis vitam in cæteris, in hac re tamen Socratica instituta sectantur: quia et complures viri uxores plurimas singuli, et innumeræ mulieres viros complures singulæ habent; omnes denique civitates, nunquid non lustris plenæ sunt, ac lupanaribus fœtent? Et quid dixi omnes? certe nobilissimæ quæque, ac sublimi adeo dignitate: quæ etiam prærogativa est honorum in magnis urbibus, ut quantum præcellunt cæteris magnitudine, tantum præstent impuritate. (p. 297—300.)

Sed . . . nunc de blasphemiis [Afrorum] saltem pauca dicamus. Professa enim illic jugiter plurimorum paganitas fuit. Habebant quippe intra muros patrios intestinum scelus. Cœlestem, illum scilicet Afrorum dæmonem, dico. . . . Quis ergo illi idolo non initiatus, quis non a stirpe ipsa, forsitan etiam a nativitate, devotus? nec loquor de hominibus sicut vita, ita etiam professione et vocabulo paganis. . . . Illud perniciosius ac scelestius, quod multi eorum qui professionem Christo dicaverant, mente idolis serviebant. Quis enim

non eorum qui Christiani appellabantur, Cœlestem illum aut post Christum adoravit, aut quod est pejus multo, ante quam Christum? Quis non dæmoniacorum sacrificiorum nidore plenus, divinæ domus limen intravit, et cum fœtore ipsorum dæmonum Christi altare conscendit? . . . Ecce quæ Afrorum et maxime nobilissimorum fides, quæ religio, quæ Christianitas fuit. . . . Illis hoc satis non erat, ut cum calice Dei calicem biberent dæmoniorum, nisi illum etiam prætulissent: nec sufficiebat, ut mensam dæmoniorum mensæ Dominicæ compararent, nisi post superstitionum nefarium cultum ad Dei templa venientes sacrosanctis Christi altaribus ductu ipsius diabolici spiritus spurcissimum odorem inhalassent. At inquis, non omnes ista faciebant, sed potentissimi quique ac sublimissimi. Acquiescamus hoc ita esse. . . . Nemini autem dubium est omnes dominorum familias aut similes esse dominis, aut deteriores: quamvis hoc usitatius, ut deteriores. . . . Numquid illa leviora quæ nobilibus ignobilibusque communia? odia scilicet atque execrationes sanctorum omnium dico. . . . Insectabantur Afri atque oderant servos Dei, et in iis Deum. . . . Ita igitur et in monachis, id est sanctis Dei Afrorum probatur odium, quia irridebant scilicet, quia maledicebant, quia insectabantur, quia detestabantur, quia omnia in illos pene fecerunt, quæ in Salvatorem nostrum Judæorum impietas fecit. (p. 302—307.)

Itaque eos non sine causa, ut dixi, oderunt, in quibus omnia sibi æmula atque inimica cernebant. Illi enim vivebant jugiter in nequitia, isti in innocentia: illi in libidine, isti in castitate: illi in lustris, isti in monasteriis: illi prope jugiter cum Diabolo, isti sine cessatione cum Christo. Non sine causa itaque istud fuit, quod intra Africæ civitates, et maxime intra Carthaginis muros palliatum et pallidum, et recisis comarum fluentium jubis ad cutem tonsum videre, tam infelix ille populus quam infidelis sine convicio atque execratione vix poterat. Et si quando aliquis Dei servus, aut de Ægyptiorum cœnobiis, aut de sacris Hierosolymorum locis, aut de sanctis eremi venerandisque secretis ad urbem illam officio divini operis accessit, simul ut in populo apparuit, contumelias, sacrilegia, et maledictiones excepit. Nec solum hoc sed improbissimis flagitiosorum hominum cachinnis, et detestantibus ridentium sibilis, quasi taureis cædebatur, vere ut siquis ea inscius rerum fieri videret, non aliquem hominem ludificari, sed novum inauditumque monstrum abigi atque exterminari arbitraretur. Ecce Afrorum, et præcipue Carthaginensium fidem! (p. 308, 309.)

Such is Salvian's testimony—a testimony unimpeached in all its main parts, so far as it goes. But it is said—This dismal report relates to the West, and to Northern Africa only, and leaves the Eastern Church unscathed. Let us see then in what condition the East was at the same period, or earlier. "Salvian does not inculpate the Eastern Church." Are then the advocates of antiquity prepared to stake their cause upon the purity and integrity of the Eastern Church, at the close of the Nicene era? This will hardly be ventured. The Eastern Church of this period has, I believe, been surrendered as indefensible by writers well disposed to save its credit if possible; but it is easily proved to have abandoned itself early to whatever is most frivolous and culpable in demonolatrous worship.

We shall, however, look to the East; but must return, for a moment, to the West, or to those portions of it to which Salvian's testimony more immediately relates; and we observe—in the first

place, that these countries—North Africa especially, had (and very *lately* at the time when Salvian wrote) been under the episcopal care of men in no respect less able, upright, or assiduous than were the most eminent of their contemporaries in the East. Whatever might be hypothetically assumed, as to the pastoral influence of Chrysostom and Basil, might also, with equal confidence, be assumed in behalf of Augustine, and his colleagues; nay, with more appearance of reason, inasmuch as the latter had but just gone from their labours; whereas the great men of the eastern church had sunk from their places some years earlier.

If then the church system—THE SACRAMENTAL AND ASCETIC SCHEME had, in the hands of Augustine and his colleagues, lamentably failed to secure for the mass of society the moral benefits which are seen to attend the course of pure Christianity; and if, on the contrary, it left the community in a condition not at all superior to that of the most degraded popish countries of our own times—a condition, in fact, far inferior to that of any modern christianized country—then are we safe in supposing the same system, in the East, to have been producing happier effects? Not only is there no abstract probability in favour of such a supposition, but all the evidence we possess runs in an opposite direction.

In the second place, it must be observed that, in respect to the pending controversy concerning church principles, *it is with the Western Church* that we have particularly to do. If we make it a sacred rule to admit nothing as genuine in religion, of which we are unable to trace the lineage with an undoubted continuity of transmission, then it is the Western Church that must be looked to as our Mother; or to speak more definitely—the Romish Church. Let those who choose, draw milk from these breasts; we will seek our nourishment elsewhere.

What the general tone of religious feeling was in the Eastern Church, among those who frequented the sacramental altar, may be gathered from those many passages in Chrysostom's Homilies in which he inveighs against the theatre and the circus. We find Salvian affirming that the people rushed from church to the circus; and he denounces the spectacles there exhibited as abominably indecent. What says Chrysostom in Homilies

delivered half a century earlier, at Antioch and Constantinople?

Toward the close of the Seventh Homily on Matthew (Tom. VII. pp. 131—136), the preacher indignantly mentioning the impurities of the theatre, upbraids the people with their passion for these "satanic shows," to which they eagerly resorted in open contempt of the christiam mysteries; either absenting themselves when these were celebrated; or, if present bodily, yet in mind absent.

"Who is there of us, though we have received ten thousand blessings from him, that would undertake such a journey for Christ as those barbarians did, or rather those wiser than philosophers? But why speak of undertaking a journey like this, when many women among us are too delicate to traverse the length of a street, except on their mules, to see him in the spiritual manger [alluding to the text]. While the men, though they might accomplish the walk, prefer the whirl of business, or the theatre, to such an assembly as this! Those foreigners [the Magi] too, travelled so far before they had seen him; but even after the sight of him, you do not act in their spirit; but leave him, even after seeing him, to run to the shows: you leave Christ lying in the manger, to gaze on the women of the stage. . . . Here, where the fountain of spiritual fire is welling from the [sacramental] table, do you forsake him to run to the theatre, to see women swimming, their sex publicly disgraced! . . . You leave the well of blood, the terrific cup, τὸ ποτήριον τὸ φρικῶδες, to go to the Devil's well, where you may gaze upon a harlot swimming, and where your own soul suffers shipwreck! For that water is a sea of filth, in which not bodies are drowned, but souls are wrecked. . . . If souls were visible, how many could I show you floating there, like the corpses of the Egyptians in the Red Sea! And what is worst, they call such destruction 'pleasure,' and this gulf of perdition a bay of delight, ἡδονῆς εὔριπον. But there is more danger in such a sight as this than in navigating the Ægean or Tuscan Sea. The devil first fills the mind all night with expectation of it, and then, as soon as the promised pleasure is presented, he binds his captives fast. Nor imagine yourself free from the sin, because, &c. . . But you will say, What would you have us do? shall we ascend the mountains, and become monks? Alas that you should think decency and modesty suitable only for such persons, [the monks] when Christ has given us laws which are equally binding on all! But I do not require this; though I would rather you did so, while cities rival Sodom in crime. Yet this I do not insist upon. Remain at home with your wife and children: but do not insult your wife, nor put your children to open shame, by bringing home to them the filth of the theatre. Where is the respect you owe her, when you thus insult her by yielding her body to harlots (for your body is hers); by making her home the scene of strife and contention; by doing abroad such things as you cannot relate at home without putting your wife and daughters to the blush, and yourself before them? For you must either be silent, or thus shame them by things for which you would justly beat your slaves. What excuse then can you offer for following with such ardour, and preferring before all beside, things which are not fit even to be named?" (Tom. VII. pp. 131—136.)

These reproaches occur so frequently in Chrysostom's orations as to make it certain that the practices he inveighed against were common, and had become characteristic of the community. In a season of public calamity, indeed, the people for a while forsook these pernicious amusements, and resorted to church;

but the preacher acknowledges that his own mere admonitions to this effect had been utterly fruitless. At the impulse of sudden fear, the spectacles are deserted—the churches are crowded, *ποῖος ταῦτα λόγος ἀνύσαι ποτὲ ἴσχυσε; ποία παραίνεσις; τίς συμβουλή; πόσον χρόνου μῆκος;* (Tom. VII. p. 178.)

With the people of Constantinople, who had been in an equal degree addicted to the theatre, the preacher was more successful; having prevailed with them, for a time at least, to refrain from these heathenish pleasures.

"You deeply felt my late reprimand, while discoursing on the theatres and races. But I now rejoice that I gave it, like the apostle when he said, 'Who is he that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me?' For I see much fruit resulting from that sorrow. For as in the treatment of bodily diseases, a sensibility to remedies gives hope of a cure, so the reproof that is painful may be the cause of reformation: and the soul that bows beneath rebuke, and blushes with shame and sorrow, affords the best evidence that it will soon cease from sin. And your conduct has already given proof that I am not flattering you in speaking thus. For grieved, and wounded, and cast down, as you were, your larger concourse and greater earnestness afforded us the brighter spectacle on the next Lord's day, when you were all eagerly expecting and longing for our discourse, like young swallows gaping for food." (Tom. XII. p. 527.)

The following passage is worthy of particular attention, as indicating very clearly the general condition of the preacher's audience, and as showing a state of things in the Eastern Church parallel to that which Salvian describes afterwards as prevailing in the West; it occurs in a homily directed against the frequenters of the Circensian games.

"I would fain resume my customary instruction, and set before you the spiritual table; but I hesitate and shrink back, when I see that all my earnest admonitions produce no good effect upon you; like a husbandman who, after sowing with a liberal hand, is dispirited by the failure of the expected crops. The hope of these had lightened all his labours; and we should think lightly of all the toil of teaching, could we but see that you profited more by our exhortations. But when, after so much admonition, instruction, and rebuke, (for we have incessantly reminded you of the fearful tribunal, the inevitable reckoning, the unquenchable fire, the undying worm,) we yet see some (for I by no means accuse all) after listening to this, forget it all, and give themselves up again to the satanic spectacles, and the races, with what hope can we renew the same labours, and repeat the same spiritual instructions, while we see no more fruit than this from all that is past? while we see them following the custom and applauding what we say, to testify to us the pleasure they receive from our discourse, and then immediately running to the race-ground, and with madness ungovernable, bestowing louder plaudits on the charioteers. . . . And all the while, no care or thought of our words, nor of the terrific mysteries celebrated here; but, as if taken captive in the snares of the devil, passing their days there, giving themselves up to the satanic sights, and serving for a reproach both to Jews and Gentiles, and to all who would revile our cause.

"How is it that they who mingle in that satanic show can venture boldly here, while their own consciences testify so loudly against them? Do they

not hear the world's teacher, the blessed Paul, saying: 'What fellowship has light with darkness? or what part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever?' What condemnation then is not due to the believer who participates in the benefit of the prayers and the terrific mysteries, and the spiritual teaching, and all that is transacted here, and then after such worship, enlightened as he is by the rays of the sun of righteousness, goes and sits at that satanic spectacle side by side with the unbeliever, who is wandering in the darkness of impiety?" (Tom. I. pp. 967—969.)

From the homily on David and Saul, we gather proofs at once of the preacher's sorrows, and of the contempt put upon the discipline of the church by those who, reeking from scenes of pollution, rushed to the holy table, demanding to partake of the mysteries.

"Are you not afraid to look, with the same eyes, first at the bed on the stage, where the detestable drama of adultery is performed, and then at this holy table, and the performance of the terrific mysteries? or with the same ears, to listen to the shameless language of the harlot, and to the prophet and apostle, declaring mysteries to you? to take into the same heart deadly poison, and this terrific and holy sacrifice?" (Tom. IV. p. 889—892.)

When the people hear scriptural statements concerning the rites of religion, few but the devout will desire to be participants of them; it is when a saving efficacy has been attributed to the *rite*, that the immoral, in crowds, press up to the altar, to the scandal of the sincere, and to the heavy grief of the conscientious administrator. Thus it was with Chrysostom, as many passages from his homilies testify.

"I feel reluctant and indisposed for expository teaching to-day. For when I consider that, while we are daily preaching, exhorting, spreading before you this spiritual entertainment, many of those who come here and partake of that spiritual teaching, and of the terrific and dreadful table, pass their days on the race-ground, and like the slaves of custom, as soon as the devil beckons, hasten with all their heart to the lawless shows, in spite of all our zeal, and throw themselves, of their own accord, into the nets of the evil demon, becoming none the wiser for either our admonitions or their own experience of the uselessness of such pursuits; how can I attempt, with any energy, the instruction of those who have no wish to profit by my words?" (Tom. IV. p. 475.)

In most of those frequent instances in which the preacher denounces the theatre and the hippodrome, he leaves no room to doubt that it was those who were receiving the sacrament to whom he addressed his reproaches.

"Surely after enjoying the privilege of hearing the word, you ought not to partake of the table of demons? 'What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?' After hearing John, and learning from him 'the things of the Spirit,' do you go to listen to the shameful words, and to see the more shameful deeds of harlots, or the effeminate boxing each other's ears for sport? How can you ever be cleansed after wallowing in such mire? I give you solemn warning beforehand; let none who enjoy the privilege of this table defile his soul with those baneful spectacles. Every thing spoken or done there is the pomp of the devil. Now you know what engagement you entered into with us,

when you were initiated, or rather with Christ, when he himself initiated you; what you said to him; what passed concerning the pomps of the devil; how you renounced the devil and his angels, and promised to return to them no more. It is greatly to be feared that he who breaks these promises, renders himself guilty of these mysteries .... An ambassador, sent by God himself, has come to us from heaven to converse with us on subjects essential to our welfare: but instead of hearkening to him, or the object of his embassy, we neglect him, to listen to pantomimes! What thunderbolts of vengeance does not such conduct deserve? For not only the table of demons is forbidden to us, but the discourse of demons also; and the coming in filthy garments to this glorious table, filled as it is with the good things which God himself has provided." Tom. viii. p. 7.

"Many of those who lately left us, and deserted to the iniquitous spectacles, are, I think, present to-day; and I wish them plainly to understand that I shall reject them from the sacred courts .... For although we cannot distinguish them personally, yet we shall clearly describe them, and, appealing to their own consciences, persuade them quietly to withdraw; showing them that he only is really within, whose mind is in a state worthy of such employment; while the man of corrupt life, though he may join bodily this sacred assembly, is in fact rejected, and is really more excluded from the holy table than those who are actually shut out, and not allowed to approach it at all. For there is good hope of those who are expelled, agreeably to the laws of God, and remain without: inasmuch as if they wish to correct the faults for which they were excluded from the church, they may enter again with a pure conscience. But those who defile themselves, and then treat with impudence the admonition to approach no more, until they have cleansed themselves from the stain contracted by sin, make the wound more dangerous, and the ulcer deeper. For even the sin is not so fearful as the impudence afterwards, and the disobedience to such commands from the priest. 'But what have they done so much amiss,' you will say, 'to be shut out of this sacred enclosure?' And what greater sin would you require than that, after they have made themselves adulterers, they should leap shamefully, like mad dogs, on this holy table? Are they not adulterers according to our Lord's description? When, not carelessly, or by chance, but with intention so earnest as even to despise the church, they go and pass whole days there, for the very purpose of keeping their eyes fixed on those dishonoured women! how can they say that they have not looked on woman to lust after her? There—where unfinished sentences, and ribaldrous songs, and the voluptuous voice, and the darkened eyes, and painted cheeks, and robes artfully fitted, and a manner full of witchery, and many other enchanting baits, prepared to deceive and catch beholders;—where the vacancy of mind in those who are gazing, and the general confusion, and the adaptation of the place and of what is heard, both before and after, to excite lascivious emotions, and the enchanting music of the pipe and flute and other instruments, enervate the mind, and well prepare the souls of those who sit there to be led captive by the artifices of the harlots. For if even here, amid singing, and prayer, and the hearing of God's word, and the fear of God, and much piety, lusts often creep in, like a thief; how can he who sits slothfully in the theatre, where nothing pure is heard or seen, but every thing is full of obscenity, besieging his eyes and ears on every hand, hope to rise superior to that evil concupiscence? And if he cannot, how can he escape being convicted of adultery? And if not acquitted of adultery, how can he, without repentance, approach these holy courts, and partake with this honourable assembly?" (Tom. iv. p. 889.)

A passage of several pages (tom. vii. pp. 474—477) in which the preacher indignantly describes the abominations of the theatre, I omit, although it strikingly sustains Salvian's representations. He concludes,

"'Shall we do away with the stage then?' you say. I only wish it were possible. Or I should rather say, if you are but willing (for this is our part) the

thing is already done away with, and overthrown. Nevertheless I do not command this. Withhold your sanction from it, while it exists: this would be more praiseworthy than destroying it. If no others can excite your emulation, at least do not fall short of the barbarians, for even they are free from the impurity of these exhibitions. What excuse, then, can avail us at last, if we, who are the citizens of heaven, the fellow-choristers with cherubim, and the companions of angels, are in these things *worse than barbarians*, and this when we might have found better pleasures without number. If your mind needs recreation, go to the parks, to the flowing river, to the lakes: study the garden; listen to the chirping of grasshoppers; familiarize yourself with the burying-places of the martyrs, where you will gain health for the body, and profit for the soul, instead of present mischief and future remorse."

The indirect evidence arising from Chrysostom's very frequent and impassioned denunciations of theatrical amusements (gross as he declares them to have been) may be safely taken as indicating nearly the lowest moral condition to which a christian profession can be supposed, in any case, to fall. The preacher addressed a people who, driven by their superstitious fears to church, were carried, by the full tide of all their tastes, to the theatre. I must ask the reader, who can consult Chrysostom, to compare Salvian's description of the Carthaginian church, with his language in the passage I refer to.—In Matt. Hom. 37, tom. vii. p. 475. The identity of phrases in several instances will not escape his notice; and particularly the assertion, so disgraceful to a christian people, of the better moral feeling of the barbarians who would not admit among themselves any such debauching pleasures. "What apology shall *we* frame—we citizens of heaven, we numbered with the cherubic quire, we the companions of angels, if, on this ground, we are worse than barbarians?" This is nearly Salvian's language. If the passage I here refer to does not support my allegations as well as Salvian's, let it be produced.

Salvian says—"when the games are celebrated, the churches are empty;" Chrysostom, that his congregation were, at such times, sensibly diminished: *πάλιν ἱπποδρομίαι, καὶ πάλιν ὁ σύλλογος ἡμῖν ἐλάττων γέγονε*, Tom. i. 613. In this instance the preacher comforts himself with the presence and attention of those who remained; but in another he vents the sorrows of his heart, while he confesses that his frequent and urgent dehortations had fallen like seed upon the surface of a rock. (Tom. iv. p. 48.) This Sixth Homily upon Genesis, is conclusive as to the temper and character of the preacher's audience.

Similar expostulations, it may be remarked, occur in the

Orations of Gregory Nazianzen; as in the 27th oration, addressed to the christian people of Constantinople.

Turpe enim fuerit, si hæc urbs ita urbibus aliis præstet, ut tamen voluntatibus cedat, aut cætera quidem gravis et moderata sit, verum circa ludos Circenses et spectacula, et cursus ac venationes *adeo insaniat*, ut hæc pro vita et serio quodam instituto habeat, atque urbs, inter urbes principatum tenens, ludentium urbs sit, quam aliis quoque virtutum omnium exempla præbere multo æquius erat et congruentius. Utinam hæc abjiciatis . . .

With this concurrent testimony of these eminent men, as to the East, to what purpose is it to say—"Salvian's report belongs only to Gaul, Spain, and North Africa?" The same heavy theme is on the lips of all the great preachers of the time. Augustine, when addressing the people of Carthage, involves them in a crimination as heavy as that advanced by Salvian.

"We speak not of pagans, we speak not of Jews, but of christians: no, nor these catechumens merely; but of baptized christians. Quam multos enim *hodie* fratres nostros cogitamus et plangimus ire in vanitates et insanias mendaces, negligere quo vocati sunt. Qui si forte in ipso Circo aliqua ex caussa expavescant, continuo se signant, et stant illic *portantes in fronte* unde abscederent, si hoc in corde portarent. Only let there be some sudden alarm in the playhouse, and you will see how these christians will cross themselves! Cry 'fire!' and there will be hundreds of christian foreheads, where there are no christian hearts." In Psalm L.

And again to the same purport; 'Quam multi enim baptizati hodie Circum implere, quam istam basilicam maluerunt!' In Psalmum LXXX. Precisely what Chrysostom affirms of the baptizati of Antioch and Constantinople; 'alii concurrunt (ad theatrum) sed forte Pagani, forte Judæi! Immo vero tam pauci essent in theatris, ut erubescendo discederent, si Christiani ad theatra non accederent.' This is enough to prepare us for whatever Salvian afterwards affirms concerning the North African professors of Christianity.

It is instructive to follow these 'baptizati' from the theatre and circus to the shrines of the martyrs, where the last enormities of drunken revelry and impurity were mingled with fanatical excitements among the people, and interested juggling on the part of the priests. On this subject evidence will have elsewhere been furnished. A general report of the condition of the christian community in his times, is comprehended in the following passage.

Attendamus etiam navem Gentium. Videamus si non tanta multitudo collecta est in Ecclesiam, ut vix ibi appareant grana frumenti in tam multo numero palearum. Quam multi raptores, quam multi ebriosi, quam multi maledici, quam multi spectatores theatorum! Nonne ipsi implent ecclesias,

qui implent et theatra? Et talia plerumque seditionibus quærunt in ecclesiis, qualia solent in theatris. Et plerumque si aliquid spiritaliter dicatur aut jubeatur, resistant, reluctantur sequentes carnem, repugnantes Spiritui Sancto. Unde Judæos quoque Stephanus accusabat. In ista civitate (Carthagine) fratres mei, nonne experti sumus quod recordatur nobiscum Sanctitas Vestra, quanto periculo nostro de ista Basilica ebriositates expulerit Deus? Nonne seditione carnalium pene mergebatur nobiscum navis?—*Sermo* 252 *in diebus Paschalibus.*

Augustine says—quam multi—quam multi: Salvian, reporting the condition *of the same community*, only a few years later, uses more absolute terms, and says *omnes*, vel pene omnes—*permulti*—omnes, præter paucissimos quosdam. The natural course of things in a degenerate church being allowed for, does not the testimony of Augustine fully sustain that of Salvian? or, to put another question.—Salvian's evidence being admitted (as I believe it is) to be mainly correct, then how does Augustine's evidence bear upon the supposition that the gross corruption found to attach to the church in the middle of the fifth century, had, from whatever causes, come upon it *suddenly*, and that the church of the nicene age had been pure and spiritual? Neither Augustine, nor Chrysostom, will allow this to be supposed:—no, nor Jerome, nor Basil, nor any one of the writers of the time, if perused without blinding prepossessions.

That the excesses above referred to might for a moment be repressed by the combined endeavours of Aurelius, bishop of Carthage, and his friend Augustine, we may easily believe. But that this reform was *transient*, Augustine's subsequent testimony assures us; and that the remonstrances of the church authorities were feeble, and were felt and known to be of little avail, may be safely inferred from the timid style of the council held at Carthage a few years later (an. 397) repeating the canon of the council held at Hippo, two years before.

Canon xxx. Ut nulli episcopi vel clerici in ecclesia conviventur, nisi forte transeuntes hospitiorum necessitate illic reficiantur. Populi etiam ab hujusmodi conviviis, *quantum fieri potest* prohibeantur.—*Hardouin*, tom i. p. 964.

In dissuading the people from these disorders, Augustine distinctly acknowledges the important fact that the bishops of *the preceding age*, when paganism was giving way to christianity, had indulged them in the continuation of their idolatrous festivals, only putting the names of the martyrs in the room of those of the gods and goddesses! Such was the wisdom of the rulers of

the church of that early time! What would be the consequence of so ill-judged a compromise we need hardly inquire. Or, if we doubt, let the experiment be tried in India; let the people of Hindoostan be encouraged by christian missionaries to hold to their ancient festivals, only substituting one set of names for another! With what sort of christianity would such a mode of proceeding cover the peninsula in fifty years? We might answer—with just such a sort as was found, East and West, and every where, in the fourth and fifth centuries.

It has often been said, that the mass of mankind will never be taught to make nice distinctions. Certainly they are not likely to do so when the distinction turns almost entirely upon names. Paganism and christianity had, in fact, become so intimately blended by the very means adopted for spreading the latter, that, in Salvian's time, it was hard to draw any line of demarcation between the two. Toward this fatal conclusion things were hastening in Augustine's time; and so early as the year 398, when he denounced the practice of frequenting the temple of idols (Serm. 62) giving pagans the occasion to ask, 'Quare nos relinquamus deos, quos Christiani ipsi *nobiscum colunt?*' When those who adhered to the religion of antiquity saw the mass of christians to be as profligate as themselves, and *equally superstitious*, none but secular motives were likely to induce them to change their profession. Motives of this sort gathered strength in proportion as the power and wealth of the community came under the control of the church; so it was that, while little or no moral change was taking place among the people, paganism disappeared. 'Prius observat (Augustinus) idolorum cultum in dies singulos imminui, neque ullum esse annum, in quo minor infidelium numerus, quam in superiore non deprehendatur.'

If the bishops and clergy, instead of labouring by all means, and by *any* means to extend the visible church, and to swell the number of its nominal adherents, had allowed themselves to rejoice only in genuine conversions, christianity maintaining its purity, would, as we may well believe, have become the source of unmixed blessings to the world. But then—the principal sees would not, as they did at a very early date, have tempted the ambition of aspiring men, who regarded them as more to be coveted

than secular principalities. On this subject, and that we may gather evidence from various sources, it will be well to listen to an indifferent spectator of ecclesiastical contentions, as well as to a thoroughly honest and intelligent historian. Every sentence of the following passage is indicative of the condition of the professedly christian community.

Damasus et Ursinus super humanum modum ad rapiendam episcopatus sedem ardentes, scissis studiis, asperrime conflictabantur, adusque mortis vulnerumque discrimina adjumentis utriusque progressis; quæ nec corrigere sufficiens Juventius nec mollire, coactus vi magna secessit in suburbanum, et in concertatione superaverat Damasus, parte quæ ei favebat instante. Constatque in basilica Sicinnini, ubi ritus Christiani est conventiculum, uno die centum triginta septem cadavera peremptorum; efferatamque diu plebem ægre postea delenitam. Neque ego abnuo, ostentationem rerum considerans urbanarum, hujus rei cupidos ob impetrandum quod appetunt omni contentione laterum jurgari debere: cum id adepti futuri sint ita securi ut ditentur oblationibus matronarum, proceduntque vehiculis insidentes, circumspecte vestiti, epulas curantes profusas, adeo ut eorum convivia regales superent mensas. Qui esse poterant beati revera si, magnitudine urbis despecta, quam vitiis opponunt, ad imitationem antistitum quorundam provincialium viverent: quos tenuitas edendi potandique parcissime, vilitas etiam indumentorum et supercilia humum spectantia, pepetuo numini verisque ejus cultoribus ut puros commendant et verecundos.—*Ammianus Marcellinus*, lib. xxvii. c. 4.

It is curious to find these same princely bishops of Rome, themselves clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day, furiously persecuting a remonstrant who had ventured to call in question the pretended excellence of the ascetic life! How fit a champion of starvation, nakedness, and poverty, was a pope whose palace and table outshone imperial magnificence! Poor Jovinian might have escaped stripes and banishment, if, while winking at the pride and debaucheries of bishops, he would have left the jugglers and madmen of the desert and monastery in undisturbed possession of their hard-earned reputation.

The testimonies above cited have attached to the condition of the professedly christian community in the middle and toward the close of the fourth century: from this point we step back at once to the middle of the third. Do we find human nature nearly the same in one century as in another? Very nearly; and who is it that marvels at such a discovery? The following signal passage, derived from an unexceptionable source (unexceptionable in relation to the subject in question) is not adduced as if it should excite surprise—for nothing is more in keeping, alas! with the general colour of human affairs!

Cyprian, in reviewing the effects of the then recent and severe persecution, directs the minds of the people to the previous moral condition of the church; and he insists that what had been endured was only a necessary correction of the abounding impieties of those who had borne the christian name.

Dominus probari familiam suam voluit, et quia traditam nobis divinitus disciplinam pax, longa corruperat, jacentem fidem, et pene dixerim dormientem, censura cœlestis erexit; cumque nos peccatis nostris amplius pati mereremur, clementissimus Dominus sic cuncta moderatus est, ut hoc omne quod gestum est exploratio potius quam persecutio videretur. Studebant augendo patrimonio singuli; et obliti quid credentes, aut sub apostolis ante fecissent, aut semper facere deberent, insatiabili cupiditatis ardore ampliandis facultatibus incubabant. Non in sacerdotibus religio devota, non in ministris fides integra, non in operibus misericordia, non in moribus disciplina. Corrupta barba in viris, in fœminis forma fucata. Adulterati post Dei manus oculi; capilli mendacio colorati. Ad decipienda corda simplicium calidæ fraudes; circumveniendis fratribus subdolæ voluntates: jungere cum infidelibus vinculum matrimonii, prostituere gentilibus membra Christi: non jurare tantum temere, sed adhuc etiam pejerare: Præpositos superbo tumore contemnere; venenato sibi ore maledicere; odiis pertinacibus invicem dissidere. Episcopi plurimi, quos et hortamento esse oportet cæteris et exemplo, divina procuratione contemta, procuratores rerum secularium fieri, derelicta cathedra, plebe deserta, per alienas provincias oberrantes, negotiationis quæstuosæ nundinas aucupari. Esurientibus in Ecclesia fratribus non subvenire, habere argentum largiter velle, fundos insidiosis fraudibus rapere, usuris multiplicantibus fœnus augere. Quid non perpeti tales pro peccatis ejusmodi mereremur? cum jam pridem præmonuerit ac dixerit censura divina; 'si dereliquerint legem meam, et in judiciis meis non ambulaverint: si justificationes meas profanaverint, et præcepta mea non observaverint, visitabo in virga facinora eorum, et in flagellis delicta eorum.' Prænunciata sunt ista nobis, et ante prædicta: sed nos datæ legis et observationis immemores, id egimus per nostra peccata, ut dum Domini mandata contemsimus, ad correctionem delicti et probationem fidei remediis severioribus veniremus. Nec saltem sero conversi ad Domini timorem sumus, ut hanc correptionem nostram probationemque divinam patienter et fortiter subiremus. Ad prima statim verba minantis inimici maximus fratrum numerus fidem suam prodidit, nec prostratus est persecutionis impetu, sed voluntario lapsu se ipse prostravit.—*De Lapsis.*

As to the north African church, the 'pax longa,' to which Cyprian refers, had been nearly of forty years' continuance; and the effect of this season of repose upon a community knowing extremely little of apostolic truth, and taught to think of christianity as a purer 'philosophy' than the world had hitherto seen, is here distinctly confessed. If Cyprian ever employs hyperbolic language it is when he is aiming to glorify the church; not when, as in this place, he is urged by a sense of duty to denounce its delinquencies. He affirms then that, during the period preceding the Decian persecution (in which multitudes of professed christians were suddenly called to suffer, unsustained by genuine principles of faith) the African church had fallen into a torpid condition; and specifically, That the many, impelled by an insatiable

avarice, were intent only on the amplification of their fortunes—That the sacerdotal order was destitute of serious piety—the ministers wanting in soundness of belief, as well as regardless of the calls of benevolence, and lax too, in their morals. That in modes of attire and personal decoration, the culpable practices of the pagan world had been adopted by professed christians—male and female. That the simple were the victims of the insidious arts of the crafty. That matrimonial alliances with unbelievers were allowed. That not mere swearing, and on trivial occasions, but that perjury was practised. That the rulers of the church were treated with insolent contempt, while malignant slanders and relentless hatred distracted the community. That more than a few, most of the bishops who should have set a better example, despising their divine function and abandoning their chairs and the people committed to their care, busied themselves in secular affairs; and, wandering from province to province, caught at lucrative occupations: meantime the destitute were left without aid, fortunes by insidious arts were unjustly appropriated, and wealth amassed by usury.

Did then their bishop stand up before his suffering flock, to aggravate their distress by vague and unfounded criminations? His testimony in this instance can be liable to no such suspicion; and the language he employs is in itself enough to dissipate illusions as to antiquity. While the clergy were thus forgetful of their duty, and were in fact abandoned to covetousness, and addicted to a shameless rapacity, working the 'Voluntary Principle' in the most nefarious manner, it is no wonder that the people should be dissolute. In such a state of the community, what was likely to be the condition of those who, under a fanatical impulse, had been induced to place themselves in the most perilous position, and to profess a superhuman sanctity? These unhappy women, the victims of delusion and of the false principles and crafty intentions of their guides, became too often such as these unpropitious circumstances tended to make them.

[*To be continued.*]

SUPPLEMENT TO No. VII.

PAGE 249.

DOMINÆ SORORI VITÆ ATQUE OCULIS PRÆFERENDÆ FRATER.

QUIA nihil sanctitatem tuam soleo eorum præterire, quæ hic te geruntur absente; scias etiam sanctos martyres a nobis repertos. Nam cum ego basilicam dedicassem, multi tamquam uno ore interpellare cœperunt dicentes: Sicut Romanam basilicam dedices. Respondi: faciam, si martyrum reliquias invenero. Statimque subiit veluti cujusdam ardor præsagii.

Quid multa? Dominus gratiam dedit: formidantibus etiam clericis jussi eruderari terram eo loci, qui est ante cancellos sanctorum Felicis atque Naboris. Inveni signa convenientia: adhibitis etiam quibus per nos manus imponenda foret, sic sancti martyres eminere cœperunt; ut adhuc nobis silentibus, arriperetur urna, et sterneretur prona ad locum sancti sepulcri. Invenimus miræ magnitudinis viros duos, ut prisca ætas ferebat. Ossa omnia integra, sanguinis plurimum. Ingens concursus populi per tcm illud biduum. Quid multa? Condivimus integra ad ordinem: transtulimus vespere jam incumbente ad basilicam Faustæ: ibi vigiliæ tota nocte, manus impositio. Sequenti die transtulimus ea in basilicam, quam appellant Ambrosianam. Dum transferimus, cæcus sanatus est. Talis mihi ad populum fuit sermo. . . . .

. . . . Principes populi quos alios nisi sanctos martyres æstimare debemus, quorum jam in numerum diu ante ignorati Protasius Gervasiusque præferuntur, qui sterilem martyribus Ecclesiam Mediolanensem, jam plurimorum matrem filiorum lætari passionis propriæ fecerint et titulis et exemplis? . . . .

. . . . Non immerito autem plerique hanc martyrum resurrectionem appellant; videro tamen utrum sibi, nobis certe martyres resurrexerint. Cognovistis, immo vidistis ipsi multos a dæmoniis purgatos: plurimos etiam, ubi vestem sanctorum manibus contigerunt, iis quibus laborabant, debilitatibus absolutos: reparata vetusti temporis miracula, quo se per adventum Domini Jesu gratia terris major infuderat, umbra quadam sanctorum corporum plerosque sanatos cernitis. Quanta oraria jactitantur? quanta indumenta super reliquias sacratissimas et factu ipso medicabilia reposcuntur? Gaudent omnes extrema linea contingere; et qui contigerit, salvus erit.

Gratias tibi, Domine Jesu, quod hoc tempore tales nobis sanctorum martyrum spiritus excitasti, quo Ecclesia tua præsidia majora desiderat. Cognoscant omnes quales ego propugnatores requiram, qui propugnare possint, impugnare non soleant. Hos ego adquisivi tibi, plebs sancta, qui prosint omnibus, nemini noceant. Tales ego ambio defensores, tales milites habeo: hoc est, non sæculi milites, sed milites Christi. Nullam de talibus invidiam timeo, quorum quo majora, eo tutiora patrocinia sunt. Horum etiam illis ipsis, qui mihi eos invident, opto præsidia. Veniant ergo et videant stipatores meos; talibus me armis ambiri non nego: Hi in curribus, et hi in equis: nos autem in nomine Domini Dei nostri magnificabimur. . . . .

. . . . Aperuit oculos nostros Dominus, vidimus auxilia, quibus sumus sæpe defensi. Non videbamus hæc, sed habebamus tamen. Itaque trepidantibus nobis quasi dixerit Dominus: Adspicite quantos vobis martyres dederim: ita reseratis oculis gloriam Domini speculamur, quæ est martyrum passione præterita, et operatione præsens. Evasimus, fratres, non mediocrem pudoris sarcinam: patronos habebamus, et nesciebamus. Invenimus unum hoc, quod videamur præstare majoribus. Sanctorum martyrum cognitionem, quam illi amiserunt, nos adepti sumus.

Eruuntur nobiles reliquiæ e sepulcro ignobili, ostenduntur cœlo trophæa. Sanguine tumulus madet, apparent cruoris triumphalis notæ, inviolatæ reliquiæ loco suo et ordine repertæ, avulsum humeris caput. Nunc senes repetunt audisse se aliquando horum martyrum nomina, titulumque legisse. Perdiderat civitas suos martyres, quæ rapuit alienos. Etsi hoc Dei munus est; tamen gratiam quam temporibus sacerdotii mei Dominus Jesus tribuit negare non possum: et quia ipse martyr esse non mereor, hos vobis martyres adquisivi.

Succedant victimæ triumphales in locum, ubi Christus hostia est. Sed ille super altare, qui pro omnibus passus est: isti sub altari, qui illius redemti sunt passione. Hunc ego locum prædestinaveram mihi; dignum est enim ut ibi requiescat sacerdos, ubi offerre consuevit: sed cedo sacris victimis dexteram portionem; locus iste martyribus debebatur. Condamus ergo reliquias sacrosanctas et dignis ædibus invehamus, totumque diem fidâ devotione celebremus.

Acclamavit populus, ut in Dominicum differetur diem martyrum depositio: sed tandem obtentum, ut sequenti fieret die. Sequenti die talis mihi ad populum iterum sermo fuit.

Cui tamen celebritati vestræ, qui solent, invident. Et quia celebritatem vestram invidis animis ferre non possunt, causam celebritatis oderunt: atque in tantum amentiæ prodeunt, ut negent martyrum merita, quorum opera etiam dæmones confitentur. Sed hoc non mirum; siquidem tanta est incredulorum perfidia, ut tolerabilior sit diaboli plerumque confessio. Dicebat enim diabolus: Jesu Fili Dei vivi, quid venisti ante tempus torquere nos? Et cum hæc audirent Judæi; ipsi tamen Dei Filium denegabant. Et nunc audistis clamantes dæmones, et confitentes martyribus quod pœnas ferre non possint, et dicentes: Quid venistis, ut nos tam graviter torqueatis? Et Arriani dicunt: non sunt isti martyres, nec torquere diabolum possunt, nec aliquem liberare; cum tormenta dæmonum ipsorum voce probentur, et beneficia martyrum remediis sanatorum, et absolutorum indiciis declarentur.

Negant cæcum illuminatum, sed ille non negat se sanatum. Ille dicit: Video, qui non videbam. Ille dicit: Cæcus esse desivi; et probat facto. Isti beneficium negant, qui factum negare non possunt. Notus homo est, publicis cum valeret mancipatus obsequiis, Severus nomine, lanius ministerio. Deposuerat officium, postquam inciderat impedimentum. Vocat ad testimonium homines, quorum ante sustentabatur obsequiis: eos indices suæ visitationis arcessit, quos habebat testes et arbitros cæcitatis. Clamat quia ut contigit fimbriam de veste martyrum, qua sacræ reliquiæ vestiuntur, redditum sibi lumen sit. . . . .

. . . . Audivimus hodie dicentes eos, quibus manus imponebatur, neminem posse esse salvum, nisi qui in Patrem et Filium et Spiritum Sanctum credidisset: illum mortuum, illum funereum, qui Spiritum Sanctum negaret, qui Trinitatis omnipotentem virtutem non crederet. Confitetur hoc diabolus, sed Arriani nolunt fateri. Dicit diabolus: Sic torqueatur, quemadmodum ipse a martyribus torquebatur, qui Spiritus Sancti deitatem negaret.

Non accipio a diabolo testimonium, sed confessionem. Invitus dixit diabolus, sed exactus et tortus. Quod nequitia supprimit, extorquet injuria. Cedit diabolus plagis, et adhuc cedere nesciunt Arriani. Quanta perpessi sunt, et quemadmodum Pharao, malis suis indurantur? Dicebat diabolus, ut scriptum legimus: Scio te quis sis, tu es Filius Dei vivi. Dicebant Judæi: Nescimus quis sit. Dicebant hodie et superiore die vel nocte dæmones: Scimus quia martyres estis. Et Arriani dicunt: Nescimus, nolumus intelligere, nolumus credere. Dicunt dæmones martyribus: Venistis perdere nos; Arriani dicunt: Non sunt dæmonum vera tormenta, sed ficta et composita

ludibria. Audivi multa componi, hoc nemo unquam fingere potuit, ut dæmonem se esse simularet. Quid illud, quod ita exagitari eos videmus, quibus manus imponitur? Ubi hic locus fraudi est? ubi suspicio simulandi?

Sed non ego ad suffragium martyrum usurpo vocem dæmoniorum. Beneficiis suis sacra passio comprobetur. Habet judices, sed purgatos: habet testes, sed absolutos. Melior vox est, quam sanitas loquitur eorum, qui debiles advenerunt: melior vox est, quam sanguis emittit; habet enim sanguis vocem canoram, quæ de terris ad cœlum pervenit. Legistis dicente Deo: Sanguis fratris tui clamat ad me. Et hic sanguis clamat coloris indicio: sanguis clamat operationis præconio: sanguis clamat passionis triumpho. Satisfactum est petitioni vestræ, ut condendas hesterno in hodiernum diem differremus reliquias.—*Ambrose.* Epist. xxii. tom. ii. p. 847.

PAGE 267.

Sicut et ab Abbate Macario, qui habitationem Scythioticæ solitudinis primus invenit, mortuum suscitatum esse reminiscimur. Nam cum hæreticus quidam, qui Eunomii perfidiam sectabatur, sinceritatem catholicæ fidei arte dialectica subvertere conaretur, magnamque jam hominum multitudinem decepisset, rogatus a catholicis viris, qui ruina tantæ subversionis gravissime monebantur, beatus Macarius, ut simplicitatem totius Ægypti ab infidelitatis naufragio liberaret, advenit. Quem cum hæreticus arte dialectica fuisset aggressus et Aristotelicis ignorantem spinis vellet abducere, beatus Macarius apostolica multiloquium eis brevitate, concludens; Non est, inquit, in verbo regnum Dei, sed in virtute. Eamus igitur ad sepulchra, et nomen Domini super mortuum, qui primus inventus fuerit, invocemus, ac, sicut scriptum est, ostendamus ex operibus fidem nostram, ut manifestissime rectæ fidei documenta ejus testimonio declarentur, et perspicuam veritatem non inani disputatione verborum, virtute signorum, et illo, quod non potest falli, indicio comprobemus. Quo audito hæreticus coram circumstanti plebe, pudore constrictus, cum ad præsens præbere se conditioni propositæ simulasset assensum, seque adfuturum in crastinum promisisset, postero die expectantibus universis, qui studiosius ad condictum locum, spectaculi hujus cupiditate, confluxerant, exterritus de conscientia suæ infidelitatis aufugit, ac protinus ab universa Ægypto transmigravit: Quem cum beatus Macarius usque ad horam nonam cum populis præstolatus pro sua conscientia delinasse vidisset, assumens plebem, quæ ab illo fuerat depravata, ad condicta sepulchra perrexit. Hunc autem Ægyptiis morem Nili fluminis invexit alveus, ut quoniam universa illius latitudo terræ instar immensi pelagi, non parvo anni tempore solita aquarum eruptione contegitur, ita ut nulla nunc cuiquam humandi copia humani corporis tribuatur, nisi post transvectionem decursam, corpora vero mortuorum pigmentis condita redolentibus, in editioribus cellulis recondantur. Nam madens ebrietate continua terræ illius solum humandi arcet officium. Si qua enim cadavera defossa susceperit, evomere ad superficiem, suam inundationum nimietate compellitur. Cum igitur antiquissimo cuidam cadaveri beatus Macarius adstitisset, ait: O homo, si venisset huc mecum hæreticus filius perditionis, et adstante ipso, nomen Christi Dei mei invocans exclamassem, utrumne coram his, qui pene ejus fuerant fraude subversi, surrecturus fuisses, edicito. Tum ille consurgens, annuentis voce respondit.

Quem interrogans Abbas Macarius, quidnam fuissei aliquando, cum fueretur hac vita, vel qua hominum fuisset ætate, aut si nomen Christi tunc temporis cognovisset? Ille se sub antiquissimis regibus vixisse respondit, Christique nomen adseruit illis se nec audivisse temporibus. Cui rursus Abbas Macarius; Dormi, inquit, in pace cum ceteris in tuo ordine a Christo in fine temporum excitandus.

Hæc igitur ejus virtus et gratia quantum in ipso fuit, semper fortasse latuisset, nisi eum necessitas totius provinciæ periclitantis et erga Christum plena devotio, amorque sincerus, istud exercere miraculum compulisset.

Quod utique, ut ab eo fieret, non ostentatio gloriæ, sed charitas Christi et totius plebis, extorsit utilitas, ut beatum quoquo Heliam fecisse Regum lectio manifestat, qui ignem de cœlo super hostias impositas pure, idcirco descendere postulavit, ut periclitantem Pseudoprophetarum præstigiis fidem totius populi liberaret.—Macarius: apud Cassianum, V. 41. page 617, Paris, 1642.

PAGE 274.

In cujus boreali latere ad ortum solis, ædes est rotunda in modum testudinis, admodum artificiose elaborata, columnis et materia et magnitudine inter se paribus interius circundata. Super his cœnaculum est sublime, sub eodem culmine. Ex quo licet iis, qui voluerint, martyri supplicare, et sacris interesse mysteriis. Intra testudinem vero ad orientem solem tumulus est magnificus, in quo sanctæ martyris reliquiæ jacent in arca quadam oblonga reconditæ, quam nonnulli μακρὰν vocant, ex argento pulcherrime fabricata. Ac miracula quidem, quæ subinde patrantur a sanctissima martyre, nota sunt omnibus Christianis. Frequenter enim aut episcopis illius civitatis, aut viris pietate illustribus, qui ad ipsius basilicam advenerint, in somnis apparens, præcipit ut in templo vindemient. Quod ubi tum imperatori, tum patriarchæ, totique civitati innotuit, statim omnes ad basilicam pergunt, tam Augusti scilicet, quam pontifices et magistratus, et reliqua populi multitudo, ut sacrorum mysteriorum participes fiant. Cunctis deinde spectantibus, episcopus urbis Constantinopolitanæ una cum suis sacerdotibus in sacrarium ingreditur, in quo sacrum illud, de quo dixi, corpus depositum est. In eadem arca foramen est exiguum in læva parte, parvis quibusdam ostiolis obfirmatum. Per quod, ferrum oblongum, cui spongia annexa est, usque ad sacras reliquias demittunt. Et postquam spongiam hac illac veraverint, ferream virgam ad se retrahunt, cruore plenam et coagulato sanguine. Quod ubi populus viderit, confestim Deum cum laudibus adorat. Tanta autem est cruoris, qui illinc extrahitur copia, ut non solum piissimi imperatores, et sacerdotes illic congregati, universa denique populi multitudo ibidem collecta, abunde ex eo accipiant: sed et fidelibus quicunque cupierint, per universum terrarum orbem guttas ejus mittant. Porro coagulatus ille sanguis perpetuo durat, nec in alium colorem mutatur sacer cruor. Hoc autem miraculum fit, non certo aliquo ac definito temporis spatio, sed prout episcopi vita et morum gravitas promeruerit. Ferunt enim, quoties vir probus atque honestus, omnique virtutum genere exornatus, ecclesiam rexerit, id miraculum fieri et quidem frequentissime: quoties vero non ejusmodi antistes fuerit, raro hæc signa evenire. Jam vero aliud miraculum commemorabo, quod nec tempore, nec ulla ex causa interrumpitur, nec discrimen facit inter fideles atque infideles: sed omnibus ex æquo prostat. Ubi quis ad eum locum accesserit, in quo est arca illa pretiosa, quæ sacras continet reliquias, ejusmodi odoris suavitatem sentit, quæ omnes consuetos odores longe superat. Nam neque odori, qui ex pratis colligitur, neque ei, qui ex rebus fragrantissimis exhalat, similis est odor ille, nec qualis ab unguentariis conficitur: sed peregrinus quidam et excellens, per se ipsum declarens quanta sit virtus reliquiarum, quæ ipsum emittunt.—*Evagrius*, ii. 3.

PAGE 284.

SEVERO FRATRI UNANIMO PAULINUS.

EPIST. XI.

Frater Victor inter alias operum tuorum et votorum narrationes retulit nobis, desiderare te ad basilicam, quam modo apud Primuliacum nostram majorem priore condideris, de sacris Sanctorum reliquiis benedictionem, qua adornetur domestica tua Ecclesia, ut fide et gratia tua dignum est. Testis est autem Dominus quod si vel scrupulum sacri cineris habuissemus, supra quam nobis ad basilicam, quæ proxime in nomine Domini consummabitur, dedicandam necessarium erat, misissemus unanimitati tuæ: sed quia nos non habuimus hujus muneris copiam, et ille se spem ejusdem gratiæ copiosam habere dixit a sancta Silvia, quæ illi de multorum ex Oriente Martyrum reliquiis spopondisset, invenimus quod digne et ad basilicæ sanctificationem vobis, et ad sanctorum cinerum cumulandam benedictionem mitteremus, partem particulæ de ligno divinæ crucis. Quod nobis bonum benedicta Melania ab Jerosolyma munere sancti inde Episcopi Joannis attulit, hoc specialiter sorori nostræ venerabili Bassulæ misit conserva communis; sed quod alteri vestrum datur, utriusque vestrum est; quia in utroque vestrum una ratio manet; et sexum evacuat fides, qua in virum perfectum ambo concurritis. Accipite ergo ab

unanimis fratribus in omni bono vestrum sibi consortium cupientibus, accipite magnum in modico munus; et in segmento pœne atomo hastulæ brevis, sumite munimentum præsentis, et pignus æternæ salutis. Non angustetur fides vestra carnalibus oculis parva cernentibus, sed interna acie totam in hoc minimo vim crucis videat. Dum videre vos cogitatis lignum illud, quo salus nostra, quo Dominus majestatis affixus tremente mundo pependerit, exultetis cum tremore. Recordemus et petras fissas ad hujus aspectum crucis; et saltem saxorum æmulatione præcordia nostra findamus timore divino. Reputemus et velum templi eodem crucis mysterio scissum; et intelligamus, illius veli scissuram eo fuisse prætentam, ut audientes vocem Domini, et mysterium pietatis immensæ, non obduremus corda nostra; sed a carnalibus dividamus, et scindamus infidelitatis velamen; ut revelata cordis facie, salutarium Dei munerum sacramenta videamus. Non autem vobis et hoc scribimus, ut imitemini compositionem istam, qua tubello aureolo rem tantæ benedictionis inclusimus. Magis enim nos tali paratu fidem vestram imitati sumus, ut vestram vobis formulam mitteremus in specie auri. Quia scimus vos, ut aurum ignitum, intra vos habere regnum Dei, hoc est fidem crucis, qua regnum cœlorum invaditur. Si enim, inquit, compatiamur, et conregnabimus. Et ideo non ad fidei firmamentum, quia visionem fide prævenistis; sed propter meritum fidei, quam auditu receptam, factu probatis, misimus vobis in Domino ligni salutaris donum: ut crucem et corpore possideretis, quam tenetis spiritu, et propositi virtute portatis. Sed quia idipsum fides videtur postulare, non alienum puto (quia cognitu dignum est) enarrare specialem post tempora passionis historiam revelatæ et inventæ crucis. Quæ si ignoretur, facile est perspici, qua difficultate approbetur Dominicæ Crucis esse lignum hoc, quod certum est si in manus Judæorum venisset, omnia contra fidem Christi præcaventium, conterendum et exurendum fuisse. Neque enim in Cruce abolenda negligentes fuissent, qui signaverunt sepulcrum: nec ferre potuissent, ut in Cruce superstite passio illius coleretur, cujus resurrectionem, vacuato discussis signaculis suis monumento probatam, coli ferre non possunt. Quid ergo nunc quæritur ubi fuerit abdita, quæ nisi latuisset, illis præsertim persecutionum temporibus Judaicam consecutis invidiam, et pœne supergressis sævitiam, manifestum est abolendam fuisse? Facile enim assequi conjectura possumus, qua vi excidissent Crucem, si extare vidissent, qui et Crucis locum persecuti sunt. Nam Hadrianus Imperator existimans se fidem Christianam loci injuria perempturum, in loco passionis simulacrum Jovis consecravit; et Bethlehem Adonidis fano profanata est, ut quasi radix et fundamentum Ecclesiæ tolleretur, si in iis locis idola colerentur, in quibus Christus natus est ut pateretur, passus est ut resurgeret, surrexit ut regnaret, judicatus est ut judicaret. Me miserum! etiam ista pro nobis Dominus omnipotens perpeti non recusavit ut ubi pro salute generis humani cruifixus pependerat, ibi hominum sacrilegio sperneretur, et super Crucem (ad quam orbe concusso, et sole refugo, et dissilientibus mortuorum excitatione monumentis, rerum natura nutaverat) stabat simulacrum dæmonis, et ara simulari pecudum busta fumabat; et Dei nomen deferebatur statuis mortuorum, cum ipse vivorum Deus, qui et resurrectio mortuorum est, non solum mortui, sed et crucifixi hominis blasphemaretur opprobrio. In Bethlehem quoque, ubi agnoverat bos possessorem suum, et asinus præsepe Domini sui, ibi principes hominum inficiati Salvatorem Deum, infames hominum amores mortesque coluerunt. Prodita novo sidere Regis æterni incunabula ubi supplices cum suis opibus adoraverunt Chaldæi, ibi barbaras libidines sacraverunt Romani. Ubi natum Salvatorem cum exercitu Angelorum concinentes cœlesti gaudio salutaverant illustrata nocte pastores, ibi Veneris amasium mixtæ semiviris planxere meretrices. Pro dolor! quæ pietas hominum hanc impietatem compensare poterit? Ubi sacra nati Salvatoris infantia vagierat, illic Veneris lamenta fingentium lascivis luctibus infamis ritus ululabat: et ubi Virgo pepererat adulteri colebantur. Mansit hoc sæculi prioris nefas in tempora nostris proxima Constantini; qui Princeps esse Principibus Christianis non magis sua quam matris Helenæ fide meruit: quæ divino, ut exitus docuit, inspirata consilio, cum Jerosolymam agnoscerit nomine, conregnabat ut sibi facultatem daret cuncta illic loca Dominicis impressa vestigiis, et divinorum erga nos operum signata monimentis, purgare, destructis templis et idolis, ab omni profanæ impietatis con-

tagio, et religioni suæ reddere; ut Ecclesia tandem in terra originis suæ celebraretur. Itaque prompta filii Imperatoris assensu mater Augusta, patefactis ad opera sancta thesauris, toto abusa fisco est: quantoque sumptu atque cultu Regina poterat, et religio suadebat, ædificatis basilicis contexit omnes et excoluit locos, in quibus salutaria nobis mysteria pietatis suæ Incarnationis, et Passionis, et Resurrectionis, atque Ascensionis sacramentis Dominus Redemptor impleverat. Mirum vero inter hæc, quod in basilica Ascensionis locus ille tantum de quo in nube susceptus ascendit, captivam in sua carne ducens captivitatem nostram, ita sacratus divinis vestigiis dicitur, ut nunquam tegi marmore aut paviri receperit, semper excussis solo respuente, quæ manus adornandi studio tentavit apponere. Itaque in toto basilicæ spatio solus in sui cespitis specie virens permanet; et impressam divinorum pedum venerationem calcati Deo pulveris perspicua simul et attigua venerantibus arena conservat, ut vere dici possit: Adoravimus ubi steterunt pedes ejus. Sed in historia Crucis accipite magnum et vere divinum miraculum. Regina illa venerabilis ut venit Jerosolymam, diligenter et pie locis illis et circa omnibus, divinorum curiosa insignium, et oculis haurire gestiens fidem, quam piis auribus literisque perceperat, Crucem Domini studiosissime inquirere adorsa est. Sed quæ via vel ratio inveniendi subesset, cum index idoneus nemo inveniri posset, ubi memoriam et curam religiosæ conscientiæ vel observantiæ et antiquitas ævi, et superstitionis impiæ diuturnitas abolevisset? Verum ipso omnium et terris et animis opertorum conscio et teste Deo, fidelis mulier sanctum Spiritum per affectum pium meruit: quo aspirante, cum rem ab humana conscientia divinitas remotam frustra diligens requisiisset, de loco tantum passionis certior fieri studuit. Itaque non solum de Christianis doctrina et sanctitate plenos viros, sed et de Judæis peritissimos, ut propriæ (qua miseri et gloriantur) impietatis indices exquisivit, et accitos in Jerosolymam congregavit. Tum omnium una de loco testificatione confirmata, jussit illico, urgente sine dubio conceptæ revelationis instinctu, in ipsum locum operam fossionis accingi; parataque mox civium pariter et militari manu, brevi laborem istius molitionis hausit; et contra spem omnium, sed secundum ipsius tantum Reginæ fidem, alta egestione reseratis terræ finibus, abditæ Crucis arcana patuerunt. Sed cum tres pariter cruces, ut quondam fixæ Domino et latronibus steterant, repertæ fuissent; gratulatio repertarum cœpit anxia dubitatione confundi justo piorum metu, ne forsitan aut pro Cruce Domini patibulum latronis eligerent, aut salutare lignum pro stipite latronis abjiciendo violarent. Respexit pias fideliter æstuantium curas Dominus, et ipsi potissimum, quæ tam piæ solicitudinis princeps erat, hujus consilii lumen infudit, ut aliquem recens mortuum inquiri et inferri juberet. Nec mora, verbum factum, cadaver illatum est: deponitur, jacenti una de crucibus admovetur, et altera: sed reorum ligna mors sprevit. Postremo Dominicam Crucem prodit resurrectio, et ad salutaris ligni tactum morte profuga funus excussum, et corpus erectum est; tremefactisque viventibus stetit mortuus; et funebribus, ut Lazarus quondam vinculis expeditus, illico inter spectatores suos redivivus incessit. Ergo Crux Domini tot operta ætatibus, et Judæis in tempore passionis abscondita, neque gentibus in ædificatione fani terram sine dubio ad ipsam fabricam egerentibus revelata, nonne divina manu latuit, ut nunc inveniretur cum religiose quæreretur? Ita, ut Crucem Christi decuit, experimento resurrectionis inventa et probata Crux Christi est; dignoque mox ambitu consecratur, condita in passionis loco basilica, quæ auratis corusca lacquearibus, et aureis dives altaribus, arcano positam sacrario Crucem servat; quam Episcopus urbis ejus quotannis, cum Pascha Domini agitur adorandum populo princeps ipse venerantium promit. Neque præter hanc diem, qua Crucis ipsius mysterium celebratur, ipsa, quæ sacramentorum causa est, quasi quoddam sacræ solemnitatis insigne proferta, nisi interdum religiosissimi postulent, qui hac tantum causa illo peregrinati advenerint, ut sibi ejus revelatio quasi in pretium longinquæ peregrinationis deferatur. Quod solum Episcopi beneficio obtineri ferunt: cujus et tantum munere de eadem Cruce hæc minuta sacri ligni ad magnam fidei et benedictionis gratiam haberi datur. Quæ quidem Crux in materia insensata vim vivam tenens, ita ex illo tempore innumeris pœne quotidie hominum votis lignum suum commodat, ut detrimenta non sentiat, et quasi intacta permaneat quotidie dividuam sumentibus, et semper

totam venerantibus. Sed istam imputribilem virtutem et indetribilem soliditatem de illius profecto carnis sanguine bibit, quæ passa mortem non vidit corruptionem. Speramus autem et vobis non solum benedictionis monimento, sed et incorruptionis seminario futurum, ut ejus inspectio fidem vestram etiam de recordatione beati illius latronis accendat, qui bene verso latrocinio, longas in magnis laboribus Sanctorum vias de momenti fide, et momento confessionis anticipans, non immerito ante ipsos Apostolos et Martyres præparatum ipsis ab initio (ut ait) regnum primus invasit, et pius cœli prædo diripuit. Quia Christum crucifixum similitudine suæ pœnæ videns in eo statu, de quo etiam discipulorum fides turbata nutaverat, Dominum tamen majestatis (ut erat) confessus est: et petens in regno Dei memoriam sui fieri, gloriam resurrectionis ante ipsam resurrectionem credidit: quam Apostoli, posteaquam facta est, non tantum videndo, sed experiendo crediderunt. Nec ipsi tamen de resurrectione carnis potius quam de resurrectionis qualitate dubitantes; quia videlicet qui in orbem terrarum mittendi forent ad omnium gentium informationem; non auribus tantum, sed et oculis prædicandam fidem capere debebant, ut quod firmius didicissent, constantius edocerent.

PAGE 298.

Nos trepidi, ut nostris domibus propiore periclo
Nil ope de nostra præsumimus, unde etenim vis
Et manus infirmis foret, illam extinguere molem
Sufficiens? cum flamma suis ingentior iret
Fomitibus, paryoque exorta repentè tigillo,
Culmina cuncta simul perfunderet igne minaci?
Currimus ergo, fide tantum et prece supplice nixi,
Ad vicina mei Felicis limina: et inde
Contiguam paribus votis adcurrimus aulam,
Atque ab Apostolici cineris virtute medelam
Poscimus, impositis subjecti altaribus ora.
Ipse domum remeans, modicum, sed grande saluti,
De crucis æternæ sumptum mihi fragmine lignum
Promo, tenensque manu adversis procul ingero flammis,
Ut clypeum retinens pro pectore, quo tegerem me,
Arceremque hostem collato umbone relisum.
Credite, nec donate mihi sed reddite Christo
Grates, et justas date laudes omnipotenti:
Nostra salus etenim cruce Christi et nomine constat,
Inde fides nobis, et in hoc cruce nixa periclo
Profuit, et nostram cognovit flamma salutem.

PAULINUS. *Natalis Decimus.*

PAGE 318.

In the eighth chapter of the twenty-second book of the City of God, Augustine, among other instances of miracles occurring in his day, and especially by the power or intercession of the Martyrs, insists particularly upon those wrought at the several shrines of St. Stephen, and under his own eye. In illustration and confirmation of these averments, the editors of his works have appended to the volume containing the De Civitate Dei (7th of the Venetian edition, 1732,) various tracts, most of which are considered authentic, wherein the circumstances connected with the invention of the "Holy Relics," their importation into Africa, and the miracles effected by them are particularly related.

The first of these pieces bears the title,—

"Epistola Aviti ad Palchonium de reliquiis Sancti Stephani, et de Luciani Epistola a se e Græco in Latinum versa."

Of this Avitus, Gennadius, de Vir. Illustr. says:—"Avitus presbyter, homo Hispanus genere, ante relatam Luciani presbyteri scripturam transtulit in Latinum Sermonem; et adjuta epistola sua per Orosium presbyterum occidentalibus dedit."

Next follows:—

"Epistola Luciani ad omnem Ecclesiam de revelatione corporis Stephani Martyris primi et aliorum."

The genuineness of this epistle, characteristic as it is of the times in question, is established by more than a little incidental evidence. Gennadius mentions it, and the writer, in these terms: "Lucianus presbyter, vir sanctus cui revelavit Deus, temporibus Honorii et Theodosii Augustorum, locum sepulchri et reliquiarum corporis sancti Stephani Martyris primi, scripsit ipsam revelationem ad omnium Ecclesiarum personas Græco sermone." Augustine more than once or twice refers to this Epistle, and in one of these places (Tract 120 in Joan) with a particular allusion to the fact incidentally affirmed therein, concerning Nicodemus.

The third of these Tracts is entitled,—

"Scriptura de translatione S. Stephani de Jerusalem in Urbem Byzantium;" and is preceded by "Epistola Anastasii ad Landulcum de Scriptura translationis protomartyris Stephani, quam e Græco in Latinum vertit."

This narrative is highly curious, and illustrates in a striking manner the credulity and baseness of the times.

The fourth is a very prolix specimen of absurdity, entitled,—

"Epistola Severi ad omnem Ecclesiam, de virtutibus ad Judæorum conversionem in Minoricensi insula factis in præsentia reliquiarum sancti Stephani."

The fifth is,—

"De miraculis Stephani Libri Duo."

These appear to have been the pieces referred to by Augustine, and of which I have given a sample, but recommend the reader to peruse them for his own satisfaction.

The other citations from Augustine will be found among the Festival Sermons or Orations, in the fifth volume (second part), Venetian edition, particularly the sermons numbering from 313 to 324. These orations I have cited not always in their order, but as the course of the argument suggested.

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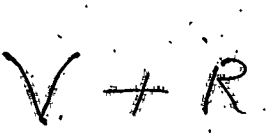

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